

Ready this week, Albert W. Aiken's "Star" Story, "Rocky Mountain Rob." Eclipsing his "Overland Kit."

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The great hero of "Overland Kit" again appears in this last and best serial of Mr. Aiken. In his new character he is, as ever, the same dashing, fearless "Kit," brave and generous as friend or foe, and defiant to the end. Rocky Mountain Rob, the reckless road-agent and daring outlaw, acts a thrilling part; and all readers of this new school of romantic wild Western life, we are confident, will pronounce it the very best story ever written. Those who have not read one of Mr. Albert W. Aiken's works, in this field, and his legion of old friends and admirers, will warmly welcome this new romance of the Land of Gold.



The road took a sudden abrupt turn to the right, and, to his dismay, the driver beheld two masked men on horseback, stationary as statues in the middle of the road.

## ROCKY MOUNTAIN ROB, THE CALIFORNIA OUTLAW; OR, The Vigilantes of Humbug Bar.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN.

Author of "Overland Kit," "Wolf Demon," "White Witch," "A Strange Girl," etc., etc.

### CHAPTER I. JUDGE LYNCH.

"Lynch 'em!"  
"Shoot 'em!"  
"Go far 'em!"  
Discordant cries from angry men ringing out sharply on the clear mountain air.  
A scene worthy of the pencil of Salvator Rosa. A little valley, through which ran a small stream; by the streamlet's bank thirty or forty rude shanties; the settlement, evidently a mining camp; the whole overshadowed by the rocky peaks of the Salmon river range.  
By the bank of the creek, a huge boulder at their backs, two men.  
One, an Indian, muffled up to the chin in a dirty red blanket, although the midday sun was pouring his hot beams down upon the earth.  
The other, a white man, slender in stature—a decided contrast to the brawny savage at his side—in his shirt-sleeves, his coat and vest both removed, and bare-headed. He was calmly trimming his nails with a little pearl-handled knife. A single glance at his finely-cut, resolute features, his brown hair and eyes, and any of the readers who have followed his fortunes in "Overland Kit" would recognize Dick Talbot, better known, perhaps, as "Injun Dick."  
Twenty paces from the two men, Talbot and the Indian—who called himself O-wa-he, and

on whom the miners had bestowed the name of Mud-turtle, from his custom of drinking too much fire-water and sleeping off the effects of it in the nearest gully—was a group of twenty or thirty miners, their faces white and red with rage, and brandishing various weapons in the air.  
From the group of angry and excited men came the menacing cries with which our story commences.  
The cries had reference to the two unarmed men who stood with their backs against the boulder.  
Little cared they, though, for the hostile shouts.  
The Indian, with his arms folded in his blanket, gazed with a stolid face upon the excited throng.  
Talbot coolly trimmed the little pink nails as if at peace with himself and all the world.  
Three men seemed to be the ringleaders of the angry mob.  
The first, a man just about Talbot's size, with a short, yellowish beard, steel-blue eyes, and hair curiously streaked black and yellow. He was known among the miners as Jim York.  
The second was a tall, rawboned fellow, with long, yellow hair and sharp, peaked features, a Yankee from 'way-down-East, by name Denton, but more commonly called "Kangaroo," from his build.

The third, a powerfully-built man of thirty, with the oval face and lantern jaws so common to the men of the South-western States. What his right name was no one knew; he simply called himself Bill, and said he came from Arkansas; consequently he was generally termed "Rackensack" by all his acquaintances.  
These three men did not bear the best of reputation among the settlers of the mining village known as Barrel Camp, yet at the moment that we follow the fortunes of Dick Talbot, the three were guiding the actions of the miners.  
"Say, finish 'em right away!" cried York, flourishing a silver-mounted revolver.  
"Yes, string 'em right up!" yelled Kangaroo, a bowie-knife, a foot long, in his hand.  
"Don't bother with a rope; riddle 'em full o' holes!" exclaimed Rackensack, leveling an old-fashioned Kentucky rifle menacingly at the two.  
"Hadin't we better have a trial?" suggested one of the miners, a little cooler than the rest of the excited throng.  
The crowd was increasing every moment, as miner after miner came hurrying into town, attracted by the noise.  
"What's the use of a trial, gents?" roared York, defiantly. "Judge Lynch can take care of this affair. We all know that they are guilty. That lying Injun has stole every thing he could get his hands on ever since he came to this hyer camp."  
"Me good Injun," said the chief, ironically.  
"You lie, you 'tarnal cuss!" yelled Kangaroo, in a rage. "You stole my blanket!"  
"Chief no steal blanket—find 'um," the savage replied.  
"And as for the other," continued York, "what do we honest miners want with a sport like him in store-clothes round hyer? What does he do for a living? Play poker!"  
A groan of disgust went up from the crowd; not really at the idea of Talbot getting his living by playing cards, but—if we analyze the motives which prompted the shout—because hardly one of the throng but had tested Dick's skill in the scientific game known as poker, and had come out the loser thereby.

"What do you do for a living yourself, Jim?" asked Talbot, quietly.  
Several of the crowd tittered.  
York's principal occupation had been card-playing ever since the town of Barrel Camp had been honored by his distinguished presence. "And he doesn't play a square game either," continued York.  
"You lie," cried Talbot, coolly; "and if I was a free man, and had my weapons, you wouldn't dare to say it."  
"Big Injun eat lying pale-face bimeby—sometime," the savage said.  
"Come, gents, string us right up without judge or jury," Talbot exclaimed. "Better finish the affair, and have it off your minds. I had about as soon die as live."  
"Settle 'em at once, I say!" cried York, taking deliberate aim at Talbot.  
"Hold on, gentlemen! Ain't we rushing matters a little?" said a clear-toned voice. The speaker was a youth of perhaps eighteen or twenty, who had ridden up on a fine black horse a few minutes before, and had remained on the outskirts of the crowd in conversation with one of the miners.  
The crowd looked in astonishment at the new-comer.  
The speaker was slender in form, and delicate in feature. His hair was glossy black, and curled in little crispy ringlets all over his head. His face was dark, the skin bronzed by a southern sun. No trace of a beard showed itself upon the chin or lip; yet, boy though he was, the firm-set, resolute chin, and the bright, flashing black eyes told of an iron will.  
"Who asked you to interfere?" growled York, with a hostile glance directed at the young man.  
"He runs the whole machine, stranger," said Talbot, sarcastically, referring to York.  
"It's about time that some one else took hold, then," the stranger said, in his clear, musical voice.  
"Hadin't you better mind your own business, and not stick your pick into some one else's claim?" asked Rackensack, coming to York's assistance.

"When I strike a 'lead,' I generally follow it up," replied the youth, not in the least abashed by the threatening looks of the ringleaders of the throng. "Gentlemen, I again put the question to you. Haven't you gone a little too fast in this matter? Will you kill a couple of human beings without giving them a chance for their lives? It isn't right. True, we haven't got a court here to try these men, but what of that? Here among the mountains every man is a court in himself. Are you honest men? Can you be bought to say that right is wrong, and wrong is right? No! you have sense—you have honesty; what more do you want in a court of justice?"  
"That's so!" cried one of the crowd.  
"Co-rect!" ejaculated a second.  
"Give 'em a fair trial!" said a third, and a murmur of assent went up from the throats of the brawny miners.  
"Ay, a fair trial, that is what I claim for these two men; only that, and nothing more," the stranger exclaimed.  
"I don't see much use of a trial; we all know that they are guilty," York said, doggedly. He did not relish being beaten by the stranger.  
But the cries of dissent that came from the crowd convinced him that the trial must be had.  
"Let's choose a judge and jury, and go ahead," persisted the stranger, "and as I've got myself mixed up in the affair, I'll defend the prisoners."  
"Bully for you!" cried a stalwart miner, evidently pleased with the boldness of the young man.  
"And while you're fixing matters here I want to have a few words with the prisoners."  
"Old pard, eh?" suggested one of the crowd.  
"Never saw either of them before," the stranger replied.  
So, while the crowd in earnest deliberation set themselves to forming Judge Lynch's court, the young man dismounted from his horse and approached the two men whose lives were in such deadly peril.



"A tight place, old man," the stranger said, tersely.

"Yes, rather," Talbot answered, surveying the stranger with curiosity.

"Your name is Talbot, isn't it?" asked the young man abruptly.

"Yes," Dick replied, rather astonished.

"Dick Talbot?"

"Yes."

"Wasn't you at Walla Walla about a year ago?"

"Yes."

"I thought you was the same man."

"I don't remember ever having seen you there."

"That's likely."

"And yet I seldom forget a face," the young man replied, carelessly; "but, come to business: what's the trouble here?"

"Too quick with my fire-arms, that's all!"

"A quarrel?"

"Yes; two of them on me; they drew their weapons first and I fired mine through the skirt of my coat without taking the trouble to draw it."

"Kill 'em both, eh?" asked the young man.

"No; only one; winged the other," Talbot replied. "I've had a bad streak of luck ever since I left Walla Walla about a year ago. It's been going from bad to worse. I wouldn't have cared for myself, stranger, but there was another, my wife; I've seen her sick and pine away, day by day, and not an hour ago when these fellows dragged me from my shanty, they took me from beside her dead body. If it hadn't been for that they would have never taken me living. But, I guess the thing is played now; my pile of checks are gone and I'll 'chip in' nary time more. I tell you, stranger, 'tain't any use to fight against luck; quit the game when you find it's dead against you."

"Your wife is gone, eh?" the young stranger said, thoughtfully.

"Yes," Dick replied, and the big tears rose in the eyes of the strong man despite his efforts to keep them back.

"I am sorry for that," the stranger said, musingly. "I wanted her to live."

Talbot looked at the young man in amazement.

"I don't understand how her life or death can concern you," he said.

"You will understand one of these days," the young man replied, carelessly. "Do you know that I have been 'hunting you' for nearly a year?"

Dick shook his head.

"That's so. What do you suppose I want of you?"

"I can't imagine."

"I want to kill you," and the young man uttered the words as coolly as though he had but asked the time of day.

"To kill me?" Dick cried, in amazement. "Well, all you have got to do is hold your tongue and my good friends over yonder will save you the trouble."

"Oh, no! I'm going to save you from them; save you for myself. It is not your death simply that I want; you must die a death of torture, calling vainly upon heaven in many an end your sufferings. I'll give you another year to live, and then prepare, for I'll hunt you down were you to seek concealment at the very end of the earth."

Talbot looked at the young stranger in utter amazement; at first he thought that he was talking with a madman, but there was no trace of madness in the clear eyes and calm face.

"Stranger, I don't know how I have ever injured you, but if I got clear of this difficulty I shall begin to think that the luck has changed, and I'll make a tough fight for my life."

"That is just what I want. I should be ashamed to strike a man who made no resistance," the stranger replied. "Remember, a year from to-day I strike upon your trail; hide yourself where you please, I'll find you."

"You won't have to go far, stranger," Talbot replied, quietly. "I am not one of the kind that hide."

"Now then, we're all ready for the trial," York exclaimed, putting an end to the conversation.

The court was formed and the lynch trial commenced. Little heed the many lawyers gave to the forms of law. All they wanted was justice.

The trial was brief, and the young stranger carried judge and jury along with him. He proved conclusively that the men who had interfered at Talbot's hands had provoked the quarrel and had first displayed weapons.

The crowd, who had been hounded on by York and his two companions to attack Talbot and the Indian, had now time to think of the matter over, and had come to the conclusion that it wasn't no great sin for a man to protect himself when assailed.

The verdict of the jury was a peculiar one.

"Not guilty, but the parties had better emigrate."

"All right, gents," Dick exclaimed; "give me back my weapons and I git up and dust."

"Mud-turtle go too!" the chief ejaculated; "go like bad white man say 'um steal'."

Dick's coat and weapons were restored to him, and a deputation headed by the young stranger accompanied the two to the limits of the camp.

"Take care of yourself, old man," said one of the crowd, good-naturedly, as Dick turned to take a last look at the camp.

"I'll try to; good-by, boys," Talbot replied, and then, followed by the Indian, he took the trail leading down the river.

The motley crowd and the young stranger returned to the village, but after giving his horse a feed, the stranger declared he must push on, as he was bound for South Pass and was in a hurry. And so, without revealing his name or business, the savior of Talbot departed, leaving the village wondering.

When Barred Camp arose the next morning it made the discovery that, during the night, the three miners known as Jim York, Kangaroo and Rackensack had left without taking the trouble to bid good-by. The reason for the "leaving" was clear; they feared the vengeance of Injun Dick.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE CHINAMAN VULTURES.

A year has come and gone since the events related in our last chapter transpired.

The snows have melted on the wooded sides of the Big Horn Mountains, and the spring floods have swollen the Wisdom river and poured their yellow torrents into the mighty Missouri.

From Bannock city along the banks of the river northward, following the course of the stream until it united its waters with those of the Wisdom river, ran the trail which led to the "Humbug Diggings," reputed to be the richest "lead" yet struck in Montana.

At the time of which we write, the coaches from Bannock city only ran to Beaver city, situated some ten miles above the junction of the two rivers. Beyond Beaver city an Indian trail led to Humbug Bar, the largest mining camp in the Humbug Diggings, and which was some twenty miles from Beaver, following the trail which, like a huge snake, wound its way down through the canyons and up along the sides of the frowning sierras.

The coach for Beaver city from Bannock had made good time that day, starting early in the morning, and at twelve o'clock exactly, pulled up in front of Dutch John's shanty, from whence Dutch John himself came forth, and announced "dinner."

Driver and passengers alike descended from the coach.

"Mein gracious!" exclaimed John, in astonishment, when he beheld the driver; "Bob Shook!"

"Co-rect, you are, Dutchy!" exclaimed the driver, cutting a pigeon-wing.

The driver was a massive-built young fellow of twenty-five, with curling hair straying down over his shoulders in long ringlets, and a full, round, florid face adorned with a mustache and side-whiskers like in color to his curly locks. Such was Bob Shook, the Express-

man, whose route extended from Humbug Bar to Beaver city.

"Sapperment! You drive mit de coach?"

"Now you 'call' me!" the driver replied, expressively. "Sweet William was sick this morning, and he happened to be down to Bannock on a little business, and was all ready to go home. I volunteered to drive for him."

There were only three passengers in the coach. One, a brawny miner bound for the new diggings at Humbug Bar, and a Jew, and a third, who kept a general store at the "Bar," the third was a woman.

A young and beautiful girl.

In person, she was a little above the medium height of women, her face was one of beauty, and yet, there was something masculine about it. Possibly it was the large, glittering black eyes, the swarthy skin and the short, curly curls that adorned her head, which produced the masculine look. She was dressed very plainly, and there was an earnest, anxious expression visible upon her features every now and then when she relapsed into thought.

Dinner over, the passengers again repaired to the coach. The girl resumed her seat at once, but the two men at the door of the Dutchman's shanty, picking their teeth, were casting curious glances at their female companion.

"So 'help me Moses, she seems a good deal more like a boy than a girl," the Jew exclaimed, suddenly.

"Wal, now you speak onto it, stranger, it 'pears to me that I've had a kind of a sort of an idea that way myself," the miner said, with cool deliberation.

After this exchange of opinions the two resumed their seats in the coach.

Shook was busy tying a loose strap connected with the harness of the off horse, and the shanty-keeper came up to his side.

"What news out the town?" he asked.

"Oh, nothing 'ticular, 'cept that that's a chance for some smart man to make a thousand dollars."

"Mein goodness!" ejaculated the host, in astonishment.

"Yes—by taking Rocky Mountain Rob into camp."

"They no get him, pretty much, all the while," the Dutchman said, with a knowing shake of the head.

"That's just what I think, Dutchy," Shook replied, walking to the coach and preparing to mount to the box.

"What ish dat you say about Rocky Mountain Rob?" asked the Jew, sticking his head out of the coach window.

"Only speaking of the reward offered for him in Bannock, this morning," Shook said.

"Is there any danger of his attacking us?" the girl questioned, her voice strong and masculine, one of the deep-toned voices which, once heard, are seldom forgotten.

"Not much, Miss; it's the coaches going the other way that he troubles. He wants the gold dust and plunder coming from the mines."

Then Bob mounted to the box, took up the reins, and in answer to his cheery call, the horses galloped off.

"Who is this Rocky Mountain Rob, stranger?" asked the Jew, who was evidently new to that portion of the country.

"He ish one great scoundrel!" exclaimed the Jew.

A road-agent, sir," the girl said. It was plain that she was no stranger to that part of Montana.

"Oh, a feller that robs the coaches, eh?" the miner asked.

"Yes; the Governor has offered a reward of a thousand dollars for his capture, either alive or dead," the girl said.

"Wal, I reckon that wouldn't be a bad speculation to go into," the miner said, thoughtfully.

"Ah, mine goot friend, he ish von very devil!" exclaimed the Jew, earnestly. "He ish von bloodthirsty rascal. He rob me of five hundred dollars, only a month ago, when I yash going to buy me some goats to Bannock."

"Don't anybody know where he keeps himself?" the miner asked.

"Oh, no! mine gootness, no!" cried the Jew, quickly; "he hides in the mountains. And then, too, he always wears a black mask over his face."

For a mile or so the coach rolled on, and the passengers remained quiet.

Suddenly the coach halted. Out of the window went the heads of the passengers. They expected to see Rocky Mountain Rob and his road-agent in full force.

They were disappointed. Two Indians, wrapped up in their blankets, stood by the roadside. They had evidently been sitting down, and had risen at the approach of the coach.

"Which way?" asked the driver.

"Bannock," said the taller of the two savages.

The girl within the coach started when her eyes fell upon the face of the savage who had spoken. She evidently recognized him.

"Seen any horsemen with their faces covered up with black masks on the road?" Shook asked.

The savage shook his head.

"Mud-turtle seen no white men since sun-up," the chief replied.

Again the coach went on its way.

During the brief conversation, the Indian who had taken no part in the colloquy had watched the face of the girl closely, while apparently taking no heed of either the coach or its inmates. If the girl had recognized the savage who called himself "Mud-turtle," it was quite plain that she in turn had also been recognized.

The road now wound down into a canyon; grim ledges of rock rose up on either side—so steep that even the sure-footed mountain-goat could never have scaled those walled rocks.

The miners, with their usual apathy, had fitfully named it the Devil's Canyon.

Hardly had the coach passed within the dark shadows of the canyon when the driver heard the sound of hoof-beats behind him.

Glancing back, he saw that three masked men, mounted on powerful steeds, were riding in chase.

"I'll give you a run for it, jest fur greens!" Shook muttered, as he curled the long whip-lash in the air and brought it down upon the flanks of the horses.

On went the coach and steadily behind came the horsemen.

At the end of about the first half-mile or so, Shook glanced behind him. The horsemen had not gained upon him as yet, but a moment's glance convinced the practiced eyes of the express-driver that they were not trying to overtake him, but were riding at an even, steady gallop.

The canyon ended, and the coach entered the wooded dells beyond. The road took a sudden, abrupt turn to the right, and to his dismay, the driver beheld two more masked men on horseback, stationary as statues in the middle of the road, the sunbeams glistening down upon the leveled revolvers in their hands.

"I 'pass,' by thunder!" cried Shook, in disgust, pulling up his horses.

"What's the matter?" asked the miner, putting his head out of the coach window.

"Rocky Mountain Rob!" replied Shook, laconically.

"Oh, Moses!" cried the Jew, in alarm.

The miner drew forth a heavy revolver.

"I'll gin 'em a fight, anyway!" he muttered.

"Oh, mine goot friend, don't!" exclaimed the Jew, in a terrible fright. "Dat ish no use; they are ten to one!"

"Darned as I keer!" replied the miner, coolly. "They don't walk over me without a tussle!"

"You're a brave man," cried the girl, suddenly, and from beneath her cloak she drew a pair of silver-mounted revolvers. "I will help you! You take that side of the coach and I will take this. The chances are all in our favor, for we have the protection of the coach."

"Marm, you're clear grit. I reckon!" exclaimed the miner, in great admiration.

"Oh, Moses! we shall all be killed!" the Jew exclaimed, in great terror, and down on his knees he tumbled.

"Do you surrender?" asked one of the masked men, in a hoarse voice, evidently disgruntled.

"You bet!" Shook replied, laconically.

"Tell them inside the coach to throw out their weapons."

"Tell the coyote we'll see him durned first, an' the coyote 'd'it!" growled the miner, from the interior of the coach.

"Are you going to make a fight of it, stranger?" Shook inquired, in amazement.

"You can jest stake your pile on that, old hoss," cried the miner. "Tell the cuss of he wants our weapons, fur to come an' take 'em."

"Now you're talking!" the driver exclaimed; "and, as this ain't any of my funeral, I'll jest git out of the way."

Shook jumped nimbly to the ground and then clambered up on a huge rock which stood by the roadside.

The road-agent looked upon this movement with astonishment.

"What's the matter?" the masked man who was apparently the chief of the party put the question.

"The parties inside say that if you want their weapons, fur to come an' 'git 'em," Shook said; "an' now jest go ahead with the fun. I'll bet you two to one they fix you."

"Do they know who I am?" cried the masked man, in a rage.

"I reckon they do."

"Then that's Rocky Mountain Rob and his road-agent, and that if they are not out of that coach within five minutes, I'll fiddle it with my revolver-balls till it's as full of holes as a sieve!"

"Stranger, I straddle your blind!" cried the miner, contemptuously. "You can't bluff this hyer party, no way you kin fix it. 'We're armed an' chock full of fight."

The masked man held a brief conversation with his companions in a low tone. It was then that the bold detective had somewhat astonished them.

"How many have you got in the coach?" the road-agent asked.

"Sixteen, an' all of 'em armed with four revolvers, two shot-guns, an' a bowie knife apiece," Shook replied, with a solemn face.

"You liet it won't hold sixteen!" cried the road-agent, in a rage.

Shook, nimble as a squirrel, slid off down the back of the powder and took refuge behind the trunk of a pine tree, drawing his revolver from its pouch as he did so.

"Tell me I lie an' I'll drill a hole right through you, you darned pole-cat!" cried Shook, defiantly. "I jest as lief take a hand in this game myself, seeing as how it's a free fight."

Again the road-agent held a low conversation together. It was quite apparent that they did not care to attack the coach, but they had a little reason for their doing so, even if no resistance were offered, for in a coach bound to the mining region there was little prospect of booty.

Shook had better keep a civil tongue in your head, Bob Shook," the chief of the road agents—who was, indeed, the notorious Rocky Mountain Rob in person—said, meaningly. "Many a dark night this spring and summer will catch you on the road from Humbug Bar to Beaver city."

"Oh, I don't ask any odds of you!" Shook replied. "I don't 'low any two-legged man fur to tell me I lie, you bet, now."

"Is there a man in the coach named Talbot?"

The girl gave a slight nervous start when the name fell upon her ears; her agitation was not noticed, though, by the other two in the coach.

"I reckon I don't know," Talbot said, but the young rooster, who was given to a rough, dressed man who was leaning carelessly on one end of the bar listening to the conversation going on.

The man was a stranger to the Bar, having only arrived there five or six days before, and had said his name was William Smith.

In the mining regions no one ever expresses any doubt regarding anybody else's name.

"Show! you don't say so?" Wal, I reckon it's mighty queer!" Johnny Bird exclaimed, in wonder.

Johnny was a muscled-up fellow, standing nearly six feet high. That Johnny was extremely fastidious about his personal appearance was plain, rough as his dress was. His long yellow hair was carefully oiled, and hung down over the collar of his red shirt—he wore no coat—and he had little golden rings in his ears. If we should strip up the shirt-sleeve and display the hairy arm, a black anchor surrounded by a circle of stars, and beneath it a full-figured ship under full sail, would have excited the suspicion that at some period of his life, Johnny had followed the sea for a living.

"It's so," said Doc Kidder, decidedly. "I saw the man myself on the shanty as I came by this evening."

"A queer place for a fortune-teller to come," the colonel said, dryly.

"Guess Pop knows more 'bout it than any one else," Bob Shook remarked, referring to his father.

All of the group at once turned their attention to the old man who was behind the bar.

Old Pop Shook was a character. He was a man about fifty years of age, rather short in stature and quite fat, with a florid face, fringed by reddish whiskers, and the short hair, which curled around the sides of his bald head, was of the same hue.

Pop's family consisted of his son Bob, the Express-driver, and a charming daughter of eighteen, Bessie, the acknowledged belle of the Bar, or for that matter, the belle of the whole country, for young women were few and far-between in that part of the country.

"Come, Pop, let us know all about it!" Doc Kidder exclaimed. "They say she's deuced pretty."

"She ain't bad-lookin', now, I tell ye," the landlord of the "Waterproof" said, decidedly.

"That's so!" Bob added. "Johnny hyer ought to know something 'bout it. He rode in the coach with her from Bannock to Beaver 'bout a week ago. Don't you remember, Johnny, the plucky gal that showed fight when the road-agent stopped the coach?"

Johnny stared at Bob in astonishment.

"You don't say so!" he cried, in wonder; "that gal?"

"Wal now, she's jest as pretty as they make 'em! Got eyes like—like—wal, the only I ever seed such eyes afore; go right through a feller like a streak of lightning!"

"And she showed fight when the robbers stopped the coach?" the colonel asked, evidently interested.

"You bet she did!" Johnny exclaimed; "pulled out the puttiest little pair of pop-guns you ever seed. Thunder! I'd 'a' bet them of thar'd bin a hull grist of Rocky Mountain Robs."

"Well, boys, I'll tell you all I know about it," old Shook said. "You see she came hyer 'bout a week ago, an' of course came an' stopped hyer. I kinder wondered fur to see a young woman traveling round alone. I axed her where she was bound for, an' she told me, you know, that she might hev a brother or a husband, or something up in the mines. But, she said that all she wanted was a little shanty, an' could I hire her one? Wal, you know, boys, shanties are scarce in town, but, that very night, poor Jim Collins got knocked on the head by the road by somebody, an' as Jim owed me considerable, I jes' took possession of his shanty. He didn't owe anybody else any thing, an' in course nobody objected. So I jes' let the shanty to the young woman, an' the very next day she hired a Chinaman an' took possession. I ain't seen or heard any thing 'bout her since till this hyer story 'bout her being a fortune-teller was told me by one of the boys, who

The dam was a success, but the project a failure. The yellow sand of the river's bed concealed no golden nuggets. Then, all of a sudden, it came to the minds of the miners that the precious pebbles of gold had come from the mountain canyons north of the valley.

The bed of the streamlet was abandoned, and the pick and shovel, wielded by stout arms, attacked the mountain's side.

The second attempt was more successful than the first. Gold was found, though not in very great quantities at first.

In some mysterious manner the news reached Bannock of the new discoveries on the Wisdom river, and when the springtime came, quite a tide of emigration set in. Then came the spring floods. The dam was washed away, and the Wisdom flowed again in the old channel, but, where the dam had been, a bar remained, over which only a few inches of water.

The diggings had never received a definite title, being variously termed the "new diggings," the "valley strike," or the "Wisdom river lead," but, after the formation of the bar, a party of the original explorers gathered together one evening in the great resort of the miners, old Pop Shook's shanty, the "Waterproof saloon," got to talking over the odd circumstance that the settlement—the great mining city, which was to be, sometime in the future—had never been named. And there, in solemn deliberation, they decided that in the future it should be called Humbug Bar. First, because the dam, which had produced the bar, had been but a glittering vision; second, because there was a bar there; and third, because it was a good American name, and perfectly original.

So Humbug Bar was daily christened in a dozen glasses of old Pop Shook's whisky, and Humbug it has ever since remained.

The "city" boasted about five hundred inhabitants, that is, counting the people of Geyser Springs, Get-up Gulch and Poor-shoot City, all three of which were really only suburbs of the Bar, although at one time each one of the three had set out to rival the parent town. But the establishment of the Express-office and the Post-office at the Bar had settled the question of supremacy forever.

It was a cool, balmy spring evening—just week by the way, from the time when Rocky Mountain Rob had stopped the coach in the Devil's Canyon—that a goodly number of the inhabitants of the Bar had gathered in the bar-room of the Waterproof saloon, and were engaged in an earnest conversation.

All the principal men of the Bar were there, the noted leaders of public sentiment.

There was old Pop Shook, the keeper of the Waterproof saloon, which was a hotel as well, the only "first-class" house at the Bar. Pop was also Postmaster. The Post-office was in the Express-office, right next door. Pop was the Express-agent, too, for the Bar—his son, Bob, being the Express-driver. And there was Doc Kidder, the best sportsman and sportsman of the Bar, reputed to be the best poker-player in Montana, and Johnny Bird, the gay young rooster from the Geyser Springs, half-miner, half-gambler, and Colonel Jack, an iron-gray-haired, silent man, a hard drinker, and one generally referred to in all cases of dispute. Rumor said that he had once been a colonel in the regular army, but that he had got into trouble and had been obliged to resign in reality, that he had been allowed to resign on account of his past services, when another man would have been court-martialed and dismissed from the service in disgrace. The colonel was president of the Poor-shoot City Gulch Mining Company. Bob Shook, the Express-driver, was there, too; and Teddy Flynn, from Get-up Gulch, and a dozen other representative men, either of the Bar or its suburbs.

In one corner of the saloon sat three men who took no part in the general conversation. They were all sitting close together in a knot. The three had changed a little since the day in Barred Camp, when they sat in trial on Dick Talbot, but one would easily recognize them as Jim York, Kangaroo, and Rackensack. Billy, who was the youngest, and was given to a roughly dressed man who was leaning carelessly on one end of the bar listening to the conversation going on.

The man was a stranger to the Bar, having only arrived there five or six days before, and had said his name was William Smith.

In the mining regions no one ever expresses any doubt regarding anybody else's name.

"Show! you don't say so?" Wal, I reckon it's mighty queer!" Johnny Bird exclaimed, in wonder.

Johnny was a muscled-up fellow, standing nearly six feet high. That Johnny was extremely fastidious about his personal appearance was plain, rough as his dress was. His long yellow hair was carefully oiled, and hung down over the collar of his red shirt—he wore no coat—and he had little golden rings in his ears. If we should strip up the shirt-sleeve and display the hairy arm, a black anchor surrounded by a circle of stars, and beneath it a full-figured ship under full sail, would have excited the suspicion that at some period of his life, Johnny had followed the sea for a living.

"It's so," said Doc Kidder, decidedly. "I saw the man myself on the shanty as I came by this evening."

"A queer place for a fortune-teller to come," the colonel said, dryly.

"Guess Pop knows more 'bout it than any one else," Bob Shook remarked, referring to his father.

All of the group at once turned their attention to the old man who was behind the bar.

Old Pop Shook was a character. He was a man about fifty years of age, rather short in stature and quite fat, with a florid face, fringed by reddish whiskers, and the short hair, which curled around the sides of his bald head, was of the same hue.

Pop's family consisted of his son Bob, the Express-driver, and a charming daughter of eighteen, Bessie, the acknowledged belle of the Bar, or for that matter, the belle of the whole country, for young women were few and far-between in that part of the country.

"Come, Pop, let us know all about it!" Doc Kidder exclaimed. "They say she's deuced pretty."

"She ain't bad-lookin', now, I tell ye," the landlord of the "Waterproof" said, decidedly.

"That's so!" Bob added. "Johnny hyer ought to know something 'bout it. He rode in the coach with her from Bannock to Beaver 'bout a week ago. Don't you remember, Johnny, the plucky gal that showed fight when the road-agent stopped the coach?"

Johnny stared at Bob in astonishment.

"You don't say so!" he cried, in wonder; "that gal?"

"Wal now, she's jest as pretty as they make 'em! Got eyes like—like—wal, the only I ever seed such eyes afore; go right through a feller like a streak of lightning!"

"And she showed fight when the robbers stopped the coach?" the colonel asked, evidently interested.

"You bet she did!" Johnny exclaimed; "pulled out the puttiest little pair of pop-guns you ever seed. Thunder! I'd 'a' bet them of thar'd bin a hull grist of Rocky Mountain Robs."

"Well, boys, I'll tell you all I know about it," old Shook said. "You see she came hyer 'bout a week ago, an' of course came an' stopped hyer. I kinder wondered fur to see a young woman traveling round alone. I axed her where she was bound for, an' she told me, you know, that she might hev a brother or a husband, or something up in the mines. But, she said that all she wanted was a little shanty, an' could I hire her one? Wal, you know, boys, shanties are scarce in town, but, that very night, poor Jim Collins got knocked on the head by the road by somebody, an' as Jim owed me considerable, I jes' took possession of his shanty. He didn't owe anybody else any thing, an' in course nobody objected. So I jes' let the shanty to the young woman, an' the very next day she hired a Chinaman an' took possession. I ain't seen or heard any thing 'bout her since till this hyer story 'bout her being a fortune-teller was told me by one of the boys, who

seed'd the Chinaman nailing the sign on the shanty."

"What's her name?" Kidder asked, caressing his smoothly-shaven chin thoughtfully.

"Merimee or somethin' ov that sort," old Shook answered.

"Well, if she's good-looking I think I'll give her a call," Kidder observed. "Maybe she'll be able to tell me how the games of poker I ought to play a day to be lucky."

"I reckon she'll be well patronized of she don't charge too much. I s'pose I'd go a dollar any time fur to get a good square look at a good-lookin' female up in this hyer country!" Johnny remarked.

Then the conversation turned upon other subjects. The roughly-dressed man who had been leaning on the counter and listening to the conversation without taking any part in it, quietly left the saloon.

York and his two companions, after exchanging a few words together in whispers, got up and followed him.

The stranger proceeded at once to the shanty occupied by the young woman who had so astonished the inhabitants of Humbug Bar by the public announcement of her calling.

"Her face was very familiar to me," the stranger muttered, as he walked on ward, "and yet she is a stranger to me. If I meet her face to face and hear her speak, I can easily tell whether I know her or not."

There was a broad, full moon shining in the sky, and it was almost as light as day.

York and his two companions stalked along in the shadow of the shanties, following on the track of the stranger.

Smith—as he had called himself—halted in front of the little shanty occupied by the strange woman.

A shingle was affixed to the house; on it was rudely painted:

"COLOMBA MERIMEE, FORTUNE-TELLER."

Smith paused for a moment, read the sign, then advanced to knock, but the door flew open at his approach; he had evidently been observed.

A Chinaman appeared.

"Commee in," the heathen said, grinning; and as Smith entered, the Chinaman closed the door behind him and ushered him into the inner room, then retired.

A candle lighted up the apartment, and by the table sat a dark-haired, black-eyed girl, wonderfully beautiful.

"Good-evening, Mr. Talbot," she said, rising, as he entered the room.

"Hallo! you know me?" Talbot exclaimed, for it was Injun Dick in the strange disguise.

"Yes, I have been expecting you ever since nightfall," she replied. "Let me warn you, for deadly peril surrounds you. Had you remained a day longer in Bannock you would never have quitted it. You are treading on the edge of a fearful gulf."

(To be Continued.)

## Iron and Gold:

OR,

THE NIGHT-HAWKS OF ST. LOUIS.

BY A. P. MORRIS, JR.,

AUTHOR OF "FLAMING TALISMAN," "BLACK CRES-CENT," "HOOVER," "JEROME," "THE HUNTER," "THE PRINCE OF PEAS," "THE RED SCORPION," ETC.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

## MERPHISTOPHELES.

"Hate stronger, under show of love well feigned, The way which to her ruin now I tend."

MILTON.

"It never through my mind had passed The time would o'er be o'er— And on thou shouldst look my last, And thou shouldst smile no more!"

WOLFE.

It was night in both city and country.

The notes of the whip-poor-will were ringing in the forest dells.

Nature had slowly gathered in its many voices of the golden day; the anthems of new choristers arose to murmur through the quiet hours; and the bright flowers, whose gentle perfume charmed the air of solitude, snuggled to sleep beneath the cool, gem-fall skies.

At the secluded cottage, where hung the awful gloom of death, there reigned a tombly silence.

For some time a single light had been flitting from room to room in the second story.

This light was carried by Theophilus Norrann; and the physician's narrow, salubrious, thin-skinned face wore a highly jubilant expression.

Just at this particular moment he was in search of something, for he waved the lamp on every side, and about his head, while the spectacled eyes, keen and sparkling, darted glances of close scrutiny in every direction.

Presently, he exclaimed: "Ah!" and then: "Um!" and, wheeling abruptly, he advanced to a certain portion of one of the four walls.

Directly before him, at a height of five feet, and distinctly outlined, was a painted head, about five inches in its greatest diameter.

He had found what he wanted.

But, before we explain the importance of this discovery to him, we must see what Theophilus Norrann did, when he ascended the stairs, late in the afternoon—stepping cat-like, noiseless, as if not thoroughly sure that he was alone, and under fear that he might be observed.

Reaching the second story of the house—which had only the two floors above the ground—one of the four rooms that surrounded him.

It was fitted up after the manner of an office library.

In one corner was an enormous desk, with glass doors encasing a number of books; and he nodded and smiled as he went up to this.

Opening the desk, he seated himself comfortably, and began to examine its contents.

"Ah!—letters. Letters and bills. Ho!—and deeds. Here are deeds—I sh keep them. Wilbur Kearn must have had a lively correspondence at one time—if I may judge by these, these—um! the deeds—thrusting several of the documents into a side-pocket.

"They may be of some account in the future. Eh?—now then, here's—a—ah! his will! What luck! I have it: 'Last Will and Testament of—' Yes, and so forth. Good! What's this? Oh! let me look at this, now."

Accompanying the will, which he appropriated, was a thin, narrowly-folded, oiled paper. Norrann perused its lines, reading aloud.

It was addressed, in private, to Zella Kearn. Ignoring much of it, he only paid close attention to the following portion of its contents:

"\* \* \* At a height of five feet, on the wall, you will notice a HEART. Press the point of this, at the bottom, and it will revolve open. Insert a finger to the left of the indentation that will then be revealed, and you will touch a sort of knob—quite small—which is a bolt. Push this bolt down; then pull, with the hand retaining its position. There may be some difficulty, as the cranks are plastered over. But pull with strength, and persevere—"



"Persevere!" repeated he; "that's a good word."

And resuming: "You will find, beyond the wall, two bags which hold, in coin, four thousand dollars each."

"O-ho! four thousand dollars each!" he exclaimed; and concluding his perusal: "With this, and the provision of my will, you—"

He did not read further, but refolded the MS. and put it also in his pocket.

"Ha! this is best of all! Eight thousand dollars, eh? O-ho! an egg of gold in a nest of secrets. It's mine, just as sure as skulls are ugly! I feel it in my fingers, already! It tickles—it shines—it jingles—so smooth—bright—ha! ha! ha! Now, what more in this wonderful desk?"

And, after looking in vain for something else of importance:

"So—that's all, I guess. Enough! There goes the sun, behind the trees—it is night. Zounds! I am hungry. Let me see if Wilbur Kearn keeps a meal in his larder for unexpected visitors."

Chuckling over his discoveries, he restored things to rights, and then went in search of something to eat.

He was soon regaling himself with a variety of cold tid-bits, washed down by a bottle or two of excellent porter.

When he had finished, he took up the lamp, and returned to the second story, where he began his search for the money.

Having found the heart, as we have seen, he applied a finger to its point, at the bottom. It turned.

He followed the instructions; and, in a few seconds, he had forced open a square of about eighteen inches in the wall.

Sure enough, there were the bags!

Drawing these forth, he reclosed the secret receptacle, and hastened down-stairs.

Going out at the front door, he deposited the ill-gotten treasure behind a bush—just as the sound of a rapidly-approaching vehicle struck his ears, and—

"I thought it—ah!" fell from his lips.

When the cab halted at the end of the path which led from the lane up to the house, Onnorramn was there to receive the shadowy, trembling form that alighted.

"Miss Kearn," he said, fearing she might not recognize him in the pervading gloom.

"Oh, Doctor!" she moaned—and could say no more, as a great sob rose within her, and checked further utterance.

Onnorramn, while he extended the support of his arm to Zella, addressed the driver.

"Remain here, please; I want you to take me back with you. I will be ready shortly—and I'll give your horses a rest."

"All right, sir."

The physician moved toward the house—Zella leaning heavily on his arm. And he could feel her quivering as she stepped along in silence, with her head bowed, and an occasional sob bursting from her lips.

"My dear, be strong. Try to be calm. 'All in a life-time, you know. You have my deepest sympathies—ahem! but—now, nerve yourself—be strong."

"Oh, Doctor!—is my papa dead? Tell me— isn't this some false, some cruel dream?"

Entering the room where Kearn lay, he gently displaced her hand, and pointing ahead, said:

"There—lie—!"

He was an apt hypocrite. While his evil mind was full of designs against this fair, pure girl, who was weighed down by such suffering, his oily manner was calculated to soothe, and his voice was emotional with seeming sympathy. Zella advanced unsteadily, to look down upon the cold, lifeless face of him who had loved and cared for her so long, and then every nerve vibrated in the misery of the moment.

"Papa!—oh, papa!—and with a groan that would have melted any heart, but Onnorramn's, the nearly-crazed girl sunk down unconscious beside the corpse.

The physician sprang forward, quickly, to raise her.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

SET A THIEF TO CATCH A THIEF.

"But more, far more must yet be done."

—SCOTT.

"Deeper, deeper let us toil!"

—MONTGOMERY.

JIMMY JIGGERS looked blank, when Dan grumbled out:

"I don't see nothin', bob-head. Guess you've kinder lost track."

"It's in there," he said, as if he did not hear, or would not understand the other's words.

"Nary time. Clean as a plank."

"No!" Jiggers stooped forward to glance into the cavity, and then he, too, vented an exclamation:

"My!"

"Satisfied?" The giant contemplated him indefinitely.

"Sh!" admonished Jimmy. "Oh! he's taken it away from here."

"Looks mighty like it," commented Dan, with a dry accent, as he asked:

"Maybe you only dreamt it, eh?"

"No—I saw it. I read it. It was here."

"Kinder gone, now, though."

"Wait! I may get it yet."

"How?"

Jiggers went to the large, square desk, and, by means of springs, swung open the whole front, revealing an interior of deep pigeon-holes.

At the back of each pigeon-hole was a tiny drawer, locked. There was no way to get at them, apparently, unless possessing a key, and by inserting the arm into the hole—except to demolish the whole affair.

"See! Dr. Onnorramn don't know that I found this out! The will's in there, if anywhere. But we can't get in, because we've got no key."

"Sure 'at the will's in there?" interrogated the giant, gazing studiously at the contrivance.

"Yes; it must be."

"An' you ain't got no key?"

"No."

"Well, you jest watch me, bob-head, an' I'll show you somethin'! I've got a key 'at'll bust open the whole thing!"

"You aren't going to mash it up?" exclaimed Jimmy, in perturbation; "why, he'd kill me when he found it out—I vow he would!—for he'd swear that I did it!"

"Jest you watch."

Dan went to the back of the desk.

He drew back his foot, and sent the heel of his enormous boot into the wood with a thudding crash.

Next he grasped the aperture in his fingers of iron, and ripped open a space-sufficient to admit his arm.

"How's that, bob-head?"

"My! Suppose the Doctor should come in!"

"Well, if he did I'd be mighty ap' to choke 'im, that's all. Jest come an' look over all these 'ere papers—I've got to 'em."

Jiggers hastened to draw out several documents.

They were lucky in finding what they wanted at the first attempt.

"Here it is! Here it is!" he cried.

"Got the articles?"

"Yes, and—oh, look here! Here's both!"

"Both?"

"The genuine will, and the forged will!"

"Both?"

Jimmy Jiggers was, generally, too serious to smile; but he laughed aloud, in glee, when he discovered that he held both the genuine and the forged will.

"An' I know where Cal Mandor's heirs are, too!" chuckled Dan, after they had carefully read over the wills. "You jest stick to me, bob-head; there's a heap of good luck in this for me—an' for you, too."

The giant soon left the house, taking the valuable documents with him.

But before he went, he and Jiggers entered into a plan to overwhelm Theophilus Onnorramn—which plan will be developed shortly.

When alone, Jiggers danced and skipped about the office.

"Oho! oho! I'm Jiggers, the drunkard, eh?—Jiggers, the sot! A fool!—and a dog!—and a football! Oho! he! he! we'll see!—we'll see! So, so, my good master Doctor—no more torment for your slave, Jimmy Jiggers! We'll put you to flight! I see you running now, at full speed—with your hair on end! We'll tie a tin-pan to your leg, and set the hounds after you! You'll squeal! and you'll shout, 'Mercy! mercy!'—he! he! And your friend, the devil, will catch you at last. Oho! ho-he!"

He produced the liquor-flask from his pocket.

But he paused, with the nozzle of the bottle within an inch of his lips, and lowered it slowly, while a strange look settled in his ugly face.

"No, I'll not drink!" he whispered, a little huskily. "I mustn't do it. He might find out what I've done, and then, while I was drunk and helpless, he'd kill me! No, I'll keep sober—I'll keep sober."

Taking a large canvas map from the wall, he hung it over the back of the desk, to hide what Dan Cassar had done with his boot-heel.

Then he seated himself to finish the writing which so many events had delayed, and to calm himself for a meeting with his ex-acting employer.

Let us follow Big Dan.

He had not taken a dozen steps after leaving Onnorramn's office, before he encountered two men, who halted directly in front of him.

These were Percy and Neol.

The meeting was an accidental one, for the first cried:

"Ho! Dan Cassar, by the soul of luck!"

"We've had a long hunt for you," said Neol; and Percy added:

"Yes, by all that's tiresome! we've beat back and forth, up and down, through and through, till our backs are humped with aching! Where have you hid yourself?"

In some chimney-top? We went to the 'den; but—may the devil anoint it—it's chock full of police."

"An' what's the thunder's the matter? What've you been a-racin' after me for? I don't owe you nothin'!"

"Well, it's just this: Queen Ruby's disbanded."

"Disbanded?"

"Broke up."

"Broke up?"

"Left us," inserted Neol.

"Left you?" The giant gazed inquiringly into the bearded visages.

"Yes, she's cut loose, and give us a big share. We're never to recognize her, by word nor look. And she wants to see you to-night—to get rid of you, too, I wager—eh, Neol?"

"Yes, that's it."

Big Dan was somewhat puzzled, until he learned what had transpired on the night previous, at the house of Ida Wyn.

"She wants to see you to-night," Percy impressed upon him.

"I'll be there."

Nine o'clock in the evening.

Cassar had been loitering in the vicinity of his 'den,' to see if there would occur any chance for him to remove the treasure which he had stowed away in the cellar.

Shortly after sundown, the house (which had been in the possession of a police force all day, and which was examined by the authorities, without any suspicious discovery being made), was closed; and Dan heard one of the officers remark, as two of them passed very near him:

"We'll look into the thing more closely in the morning. There must be a cellar to the place, and we haven't found any way to get to it."

"Yes," thought the unsuspecting listener, "an' I'll have my traps well oiled the way, before you find that 'ere cellar—blast you!"

He then started for the residence of Ida Wyn.

Ida Wyn and Queen Ruby had been as separate each as if they were two distinct persons—the associations of one being kept studiously from the other, according to the position for the moment occupied by her who played the two parts.

Dan had never been nearer the handsome edifice than to pass before it on the opposite side of the street.

Ring the bell, he asked to see her.

"Who shall I say?" inquired the servant, regarding the rough-looking visitor with distrust.

"Dan! Cassar," he answered, growlingly.

He was soon ushered, by Ida's order, upstairs to the room where Hugh Winfield had been received.

The beauty was walking slowly to and fro when he entered—holding a small medallion picture in one hand, upon which her gaze was fastened.

She had not long since returned from her visit to Zella, at the boarding-house.

"Ah, Dan, is it you?"

"Yes, here I am," he said, in his grumbling way.

"I told Percy and Neol to send you here to-night, Dan. I am perplexed. I am shrouded in mystery. I would penetrate it, and perhaps I can do so with your aid. I have some questions to ask—about this medallion."

"An' I've got a big secret to spit out," he returned, with a nod.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

THE TIMELY HAND.

"I tell you, hopeless grief is passionless!"

"Speedy death! The close of all my miseries, and the balm."

—MILTON.

ZELLA KEARN sat, sobbing, in the dimly-lighted parlor at her now lonely home.

Before her—glancing occasionally at the drooping form, and calmly toying with his good toothpick—Theophilus Onnorramn was seated.

He was speaking thus:

"Very sad, very sad, indeed. But, you know, my dear, that these things have to happen. We're all but nothing—nothing, from the time we are born. We obey three masters—the animal impulse, the intellectual desire, the Supreme Infinite—all a concentration of mystery. Strange; much at variance with ordinary education, yet true, if you think deeply on it. When we lack passion, we can not help it; when we are robbed of those things which the mind has endeared to the heart, we must strive to bear up under the loss; and when we are called away, we ought to be prepared. Ahem! Let me hope that, with your strong nature, you will be proof against too much sorrow from this shock."

He had my sympathy—I offer my sincerest condolences—

I mingle my grief with yours; for your father was very dear to me. Be calm; be resigned; be assured that you have a friend in me, who will always be glad to serve you, in any way, at any time."

And when he concluded, he flattered himself that he had made a very pretty speech.

"Thank you, Doctor—thank you," sobbed Zella. "I believe you are a friend; I am very glad to think so. For I feel as if I had no one in the world to turn to, now, except you."

Her head was bowed to her hands while she spoke; she did not see the sparkle in his eyes as he eagerly caught at the words.

"I am pleased to hear you talk so," he said; adding, after a pause: "And do you think, now, that you could spare me? It is very necessary that I should return to the city. I will be promptly on hand to-morrow, rising at the same time."

"Yes—you might as well go, Doctor. I—I think it would be better for me to be alone."

"Try to be calm—try to be calm, my dear. I will see you to-morrow."

With this, he left the house. Securing the bags of coin, which he had secreted behind the bush, he entered the cab that was awaiting him.

After he had gone, Zella threw herself on the floor, and gave way entirely to her terrible grief.

Through the whole night she lay there weeping. It did seem as though Heaven was putting her to a cruel test, for, in her extreme of misery, she would have felt relief in death.

When Doctor Theophilus Onnorramn reached his office in the city, he paused short on entering, to look, in surprise, at James Jiggers.

That individual was sitting bolt upright in his chair, at the desk, and his eyes were riveted on the door that led to the adjoining apartment.

In one hand he held a half-eaten sandwich; his close-cropped hair was bristling, as if in some overwhelming fright, and the pen, with which he had been writing, was upside down in his fingers.

"James Jiggers?"

At sound of his employer's voice he started.

"What ails you?—idiot!" demanded Onnorramn.

"There's a noise in that room," said Jiggers, whisperingly.

"A noise?"

"Yes, good master Doctor, a noise like somebody scratching and scraping—"

"Bah!"

"But it isn't 'bah,' good master Doctor," persisted Jimmy, who had fallen back into his naturally superstitious mind. "I've been hearing a noise in that room for nearly an hour. It must be the ghost of Calvert Mandor!"

"Ha! you know his name!" with a quick step forward, and a menacing look.

Jiggers rolled over the back of his chair, and jumped beyond reach.

But the physician did not follow him up. Laughing at the fellow's superstition, he proceeded to the book-shelf, and placed the bags and documents, which he had brought with him, in the concealment beyond.

"James Jiggers, you may retire. Tell my housekeeper, before you go up, that I do not care for any thing to eat."

While Jiggers hastened from the room—glad to escape from the presence of his employer—his heart was thumping and his face was a little pale. The Doctor's remark had brought something to his memory, which, up to that moment, was forgotten.

What if he had asked, from some cause, to see his housekeeper, the mulatto girl?

Reaching the third story, he went, on tip-toe, to the slide in the door of the room that contained the mulatto and the dead quadrone.

He could see nothing, for a thick darkness prevailed; but, presently, he detected the sound of deep, regular respiration, and he knew she must be asleep.

"It's all right," he whispered, to himself; "but, my! what a narrow escape. If he had wanted to see her, the whole thing would have been out, and I'd be a dead man. If I can only keep it straight, now, until to-morrow night! Oh! to-morrow night, and that giant of a fellow will be here! Then, let my good master Doctor look out! But, that noise I heard in the back-room?—what if Calvert Mandor is still alive!" and, with this last idea running in his brain, he continued on to his sleeping room.

We pass over the details of Wilbur Kearn's funeral.

Theophilus Onnorramn had been very attentive on the occasion. He had defrayed all expenses; acted in a manner that caused remarks of praise from those who assembled in the sad hour; created a very deep impression in Zella's heart.

Now all was silent at the little cottage. The many neighbors who had come thither to attend the funeral, and to express their sympathies, had departed; and the physician sat alone with the orphaned girl in the darkened parlor.

"My dear, I am glad to see you bear up so nobly under your affliction."

"I suppose I must, Doctor." Her voice was low, but it was firm; her face was very pale and weary looking, but her eyes were bright that returned his gaze.

"Um! yes, it's always good to be philosophical. And now, my dear, we will speak of other matters quite important."

"What is it?"

"My dear," he spoke slowly, and the spectacled eyes regarded her covertly, "you are entirely alone in the world—"

"Why need you remind me of that, Doctor? The knowledge to me is painful enough, without its mention by others."

"Stop, stop, now; I didn't mean to pain you. But, it's necessary that I should speak plainly. Do you know whether your father made any will?"

"I do not. I hardly think he did, though—I don't know that he had any thing but this cottage, and the ground around it. Yet," and her eyes fell, as she began to reflect, "I have often wondered how we lived so comfortably, when he had no employment for years. He never told me that he owned any thing."

Onnorramn was laughing inwardly. The villain!

"Well, my dear, I have carefully searched all your father's papers," (which was true,) "and I can not find any will, or any thing by which your future is provided for, and consequently—"

"Well?"

"You are penniless."

"You speak of it—"

"But, I must."

"Now, you are very young and handsome. It is rather a sad plight to be alone and moneyless in the world—so pretty, too! You'll have to get married—eh?"

He was smiling suggestively.

Marriage? How the thought galled her bosom!

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"Doctor, I beg of you desist."

"But, it is for your own interest. You must marry. Think of it!—a loving husband—comfort!—luxury—money—all fine to have, you know; ahem! better than poverty, eh?"

"Let us drop this. I shall never marry."

Zella turned to the window, and, throwing open the shutters, gazed out over the familiar landscape. The action was to hide from him the emotion caused by his words.

"Never marry?" thought he. "Um! that's a damper. Let us see about it."

Zella wheeled suddenly, as she felt a set of skinny fingers grasp her hand.

The physician stood beside her, smiling as pleasantly as he could; and he said, very gently:

"My dear, I have so long been a friend to you and your father, that it seems to me proper that I should be even more. I did not mention marriage, without an object. I want you to be my wife."

"Your







## IN MEMORIAM.

BY EREN E. HENFORD.

Oh, winds, blow softly round about  
The sleeper's peaceful slumber;  
The rest is hers she dreamed about  
Before she left our number.

She sleeps, with folded hands, at rest;  
God's quiet in her bosom;  
And clasps in slumber, to her breast,  
A white, immortal blossom.

She knew the blossoms and the birds,  
The blue sky and the brooks,  
And sung of them in tender words,  
And read from nature's books.

She learned, from them, the love of God,  
So deep, so grand, so sweet;  
Let nature write upon the sod  
That wraps her, head to feet;

And write how true and good she was  
Who sleepeth underneath  
The folding coverlet of grass,  
That sleep that men call death.

## The False Widow: OR, FLORIEN REDESDALE'S FORTUNE.

BY MRS. JENNIE ADAMS BURTON,  
AUTHOR OF "ADRIA, THE DOVE," "CHILL'S  
DECEIT," "STRANGELY WED," "MADAME  
DURAND'S PROTEGES," ETCO., ETCO.

## CHAPTER X.

## NEW YEAR'S EVE AGAIN.

ANOTHER New Year's Eve—New Year's  
Eve and the night of Florien's coming out  
party.

A stately mansion, one of an imposing  
block in an "up town" square, seeming  
one glare of light from roof to basement,  
and filled with a perfumed, flattering  
thrang.

Mrs. Redesdale, in severe black velvet and  
marabout feathers, took the arm of a gen-  
tleman in waiting and moved away from  
the post where she had been receiving, to  
mingle with the guests.

The band, stationed away in some flower-  
draped nook, struck up a lively prelude,  
and the interval was occupied by the shak-  
ing out of filmy skirts, as one after another  
of the young couples took a position on the  
floor, and the chief amusement of the even-  
ing—dancing—had begun.

Florien, the bright particular star of the  
occasion—the belle of the coming season—  
led the German with Walter Lynne. Walter  
Lynne, the man of her choice, the  
straight, slender, fair-haired, comely young  
gentleman, with dimpled-dotted chin and  
blonde complexion—the man whose ring  
circled her finger under the supple fit of her  
white kid glove—the man to whom she had  
resigned the power to rule her destiny, to  
be arbiter of her fate.

They met to-night for the first time in  
eighteen months.

Florien was home from school for just  
two weeks. Mrs. Redesdale had herself  
made a flying trip to the Academy, and  
brought her step-daughter home in triumph.  
She had lived in strict seclusion during these  
months, very faithful apparently to the  
memory of the dear departed, very consci-  
entious in endeavoring to fulfill a mother's  
duty toward her daughter—so faithful and  
so conscientious that Florien was ashamed  
and repentant of her first formed hasty  
judgment.

"She must have loved him for himself,"  
the girl reflected. "After all she had not  
much to gain, nothing but her marriage set-  
tlements, since papa left all the rest to me.  
I ought to be grateful, I suppose, for her  
interest, and I will be thoughtful of her  
comfort."

Nothing but her marriage settlements had  
the new Mrs. Redesdale, but, as it chanced,  
no one knew to a certainty the exact  
amount. Some estimated fifty thousand—  
Judge Lessingham had a suspicion that her  
investments might reach a hundred thou-  
sand dollars. The sum was just twice that,  
but for her own reasons the widow let it  
appear that it was much less.

This great, grand house had been leased,  
it had been furnished throughout, and the  
retinue of servants hired at Florien's ex-  
pense. It was her step-mother's home, free-  
ly offered and freely accepted; her step-  
mother had three full years in which to  
reign mistress here, for until Florien was  
twenty-one, she would not come into actual  
possession of her fortune.

Meantime she had her annual income of  
fifteen thousand dollars, out of which her  
step-mother was privately determined to se-  
cure a generous slice.

So, as the income of fifteen thousand a  
year was unconditionally the girl's own, it  
behaved the widow to maintain the most  
friendly terms.

Devotedly she mourned her husband,  
for the sake of her husband's daughter she  
came out of her preferred retirement. Her  
grief, softened but enduring, was put aside  
that its shadow might not cloud the girl's  
bright future.

And to Florien, life did appear to be open-  
ing before her in a long, bright vista.  
Nominally mistress of her own actions,  
wealthy, beautiful, she was prepared to put  
the intoxicating glass of life's pleasure to  
her lips and drink of its sparkling depths.

Somewhat changed, and wonderfully im-  
proved in these eighteen months, Walter  
Lynne found her.

And he—Well, Florien's ardor had time  
to cool since their first separation. She saw  
him now with less of that glamour her girl-  
ish adoration had thrown about him. He  
was on the same level with her now, and  
not one of a superior order of beings.

He had come early, before the throng,  
with the purpose of meeting his fair be-  
trothed alone. Florien had floated down a  
bright vision, in shimmering white silk,  
caught here and there with clusters of moss-  
rosebuds, quiet, self-contained, ladylike. He  
owned himself very agreeably surprised.  
He had not expected such a transformation  
from the wayward, rather hoydenish little  
country girl of eighteen months before.

She saw a fair, handsome young man,  
who might have served as an admirable  
model for a gentleman's fashion-plate.  
Waiscoat of the whitest, broadcloth of the  
finest, French kid dancing-pumps, neat and  
small, gloves the palest lilac, hair and whis-  
kers *a la mode*—she saw all these at a  
glance.

He had not time for more than two well-  
turned sentences of welcome greeting;  
somebody else came early too; Mrs. Rede-  
sdale rustled in to take up her position, and  
the tide poured in steadily for a couple of  
hours.

Now as they came together in the evolu-  
tions of the dance, he made the most of the  
time allowed him by the music to utter  
those rapturous nothings which convey so  
much from lover's tongue to lover's ear.

Florien listened and smiled, well pleased  
to find how faithful he had been—how con-  
stantly thoughts of her had lingered with  
him.

Of course she expected it. What young  
lady who puts on a betrothal ring at sweet  
sixteen ever imagines any thing else? Yes,  
Mr. Walter Lynne had doubtless been very  
devotedly constant to his absent school-girl  
lady-love, and he was very unexceptionably  
dainty in her eyes to-night.

Unacknowledged, away down in the se-  
cret depths of her heart, there was a little  
tremor of disappointment. He was too un-  
exceptionably proper—cut too fairly off the  
same piece of cloth with all the rest of these  
young men of pretension and fashion sur-  
rounding her. Here under the gaslight, he  
lacked that heroic element which her un-  
cultivated girl's vision had endowed him with.

She did not think of being dissatisfied  
with her choice—it had not come to that  
yet. She supposed the romance of first love  
always did wear off after a little. She had  
seen engaged young ladies from afar before  
now, and wondered how they could be ab-  
sorbed in parties and costumes, shopping  
and dress-fitting, with handsome lovers who  
existed in the light of their smiles, awaiting  
disconsolate their turn in the fair one's ro-  
gards. She began to understand it now.

Of course the bridegroom that was to be  
some day was a central figure, but all the  
surrounding mist of silken robes and en-  
trancing coiffures and enjoyable pastimes  
which went to make up the fleeting plea-  
sures of the hour, were not certain fixtures,  
and they exerted all the fascinations which  
elusive delights possess—dancing before  
like a will-o'-the-wisp which the hand is  
stretched forth to grasp, and behold! it is  
away again.

But Florien was not lending her thoughts  
to metaphor. She was warming with the  
excitement of the dance, and thrilling with  
the novel pleasurable sensation of finding  
herself the heroine of the hour—the belle of  
the ball.

Geraldine Lessingham was watching her  
narrowly, through all the mazy evolutions  
of the figure. Watching her with a little  
compression of the lips—a little narrowing  
of the eyes—an intense swelling of the  
heart where the demon of jealousy was  
astir.

"Graceful and self-possessed as a belle of  
three seasons, cool and assured at this mo-  
ment as I am," was Miss Lessingham's men-  
tal comment. "And I have been building  
my hopes for a twelve-month on her prov-  
ing crude and unformed and out of place  
among us. Walter Lynne could never  
overlook that—for a woman to be awkward  
and basifull, a butt for ridicule and ill-na-  
tured remarks. Who would have expected  
any thing else of a girl who was never off  
those New Jersey sand-stretches? Ah,  
well; every first engagement does not end  
in marriage, and it is to be hoped yours  
will not, Florien Redesdale!"

She glided up when the dance was ended  
to say, smilingly:  
"How splendidly you did it, Miss Rede-  
sdale. One would suppose you had been ac-  
customed to dancing the German all your  
life."

Florien, quick of discernment, felt the im-  
pelled slight in the tone, and resented it in  
woman-fashion.

"You wouldn't have expected it of a sim-  
ple country girl, who has run wild over the  
Jersey sands, Miss Lessingham, would you?  
I am almost surprised at myself; but I be-  
lieve I have discovered my proper sphere.  
I assure you I enjoy it as well as if 'to the  
manner born.'"

Which means she's quite equal to the  
occasion, Gerry, whispered her brother in  
her ear as Florien passed on. "Blood will  
tell—every time."

Geraldine colored and bit her lip. Her  
father had climbed from the lowermost  
rounds of the social ladder; her mother  
had belonged to the vulgar stratum, while  
the Redesdales stood high a quarter of a  
century ago. Miss Lessingham had all  
that veneration for the aristocracy—that  
disgust of the *parvenu*—which the mem-  
bers of our free republic can indulge.

"Do you speak for yourself, Aubrey?"  
she asked in retort. "Has she put you  
down already?"

"I've not been presented, yet. Too late  
for the ceremonies, you see. I will, though,  
by Jove! She's by far the handsomest girl  
in the room."

Aubrey Lessingham sauntered away, but  
falling about a dainty embodiment of misty  
lace and tulle, a round baby-face and fluffy  
hair like amber silk—pretty Cornelia Day,  
with whom he was suspected to be half in  
love—changed his mind and did not seek an  
immediate presentation to the handsom-  
est girl in the room.

When he saw her again, she was circling  
in the arms of Hugo Arnold, a young San  
Franciscan, who was "seeing the elephant,"  
in other words "doing" New York for the  
first time. The son of a treble-millionaire,  
nearly as the elder Arnold's shares in gold  
and silver mines, thousands of acres of  
stocked prairie lands, extensive vineyards  
and orange-groves, in that modern Eden—  
South California, could be estimated, he  
was the catch of the season, *petit* and ogled  
by the fair *beau-monde* of the metropolis.

But, Western prince though he might be,  
Mr. Hugo Arnold was no waltzer. His  
brains—if he had any, as some envious mas-  
culines had been bold enough to question—  
very evidently did not lie in his heels. The  
couple dropped out from among the dan-  
cers into an arched embrasure.

"What a stunner you are at that sort of  
thing, Miss Redesdale!" panted the Califor-  
nian, mopping his heated forehead with a  
web which might have been a perfumed  
snow-drift. "Somehow these round dances  
play the very dickens with my head-piece;  
the ceiling comes down, and the floor goes  
up, and I get tangled among the women's  
flimsy-fancies, and make a general muss of  
the whole affair. This time's an exception  
—pon my life it is—I never fancied I could  
do the thing so well. Would it be too  
much to ask another—aw—later, Miss Rede-  
sdale?"

"It would, indeed," laughed Florien.  
"I could go on dancing forever, I think.  
Aren't you satisfied with making me lose  
this divine measure?"

"Don't lose it," It was Walter again.  
"I'll match my head—and my heart—with  
yours any day, Florien."

"Head and heart might win, but feet—  
never. Faster, Walter. Oh, this is waltz-  
ing!"

With her bright hair sweeping his shoul-  
ders, her slender, supple shape in the clasp  
of his arm, her fair face just tinged with a  
rosy glow, Walter Lynne thrilled with  
proud triumph in knowing that this radiant  
creature was his—*his*. It was a satisfaction

to know that his eye had been the first to  
recognize her glorious possibilities, his  
mind the first to meet her in sympathy, his  
utterance the first to charm her ear with  
soft flatteries of her own incomparable lov-  
eliness. He would be so proud and tender  
of this pearl of price—his very own.

One thing—very complacently disinter-  
ested did he feel at the moment—no one could  
accuse him of having sought her for her for-  
tune. Had he not met her first—a penni-  
less, companionless girl, down on the Jer-  
sey shore? Had he not made love to her  
there on the sandy beach before she had a  
fashionable friend or a fashionable gar-  
ment—before she had seen a finishing  
school, or gained the *tone* which carried her  
proudly as the proudest there?

Who more worthy to bear off the polished  
gem than he who had discovered the dia-  
mond in the rough?

What its fate might have been had it re-  
mained a rough diamond, he did not care to  
drag forth. Without a luster and without  
a sparkle, without a rich, golden setting, it  
might have dropped heedlessly among com-  
mon pebbles for aught of him.

"Do come somewhere away from the  
watchfulness of all these eyes for a moment.  
No—not here. There are maneuvering,  
malicious mammas in every hall chair and  
window seat."

Into a great box of greenery, where a  
marble Niobe dripped weeping floods into a  
crystal basin, and rose-wreathed arches  
shadowed arbor-like nooks, they drifted.  
The dancing was at its height, and the con-  
servatory deserted except for them. With  
a sigh of blissful contentment, Florien sunk  
into a seat, half concealed by the artistic  
disposal of tall shrubs, and branches inter-  
lacing overhead with a natural effect which  
spoke well for the hand which had arrang-  
ed it all.

"What a delightful world it is," said she.  
"I never lived until to-night, I think."

"How cruel," murmured Lynne. "I de-  
rive my chief enjoyment of the night from  
the recollection of a certain episode in your  
old life down at the Jersey beach. You  
don't mean you count that out of your  
life?"

His sense of security was just the least bit  
in the world shaken. Suppose she should  
have left the old life behind her—that little  
hour when Cupid reigned, and the girl's  
promise was trustfully given along with the  
rest.

He had not been growing unselfish in  
these eighteen months past. He had made  
himself master of her affairs very complet-  
ely, as he intended to make himself master  
of her at the early date which would seem  
consistent with the ardor of an impetuous  
lover.

"One can live on fifteen thousand dollars  
a year," had been his private reflection.  
"Live at a pretty tolerable style, and keep  
up a pretty wife—or let the pretty wife  
keep me, rather. Dear little Florien; so  
fond of me as she was, she'll esteem it a  
privilege, I'm sure. It'll be an easy matter  
to stave off duns with three hundred thou-  
sand in certain prospective. I'll change my  
manner of life—I vow I will—with her ten-  
der little hand to guide the silken halter.  
I'll cut the shirks around them—I—and  
settle down into the model of a domestic  
man."

For a half-minute of time the atmosphere  
of approving self-complacency was stirred  
by a doubt, as he awaited her response.  
"That? Oh, it was a foretaste, I suppose.  
You couldn't expect a cleft in the cliff, and  
an adoring young man to compare with a  
lighted ball-room and a dozen, could you?"

"Deuce take them all! begging your  
pardon, Miss Redesdale."

"What did you say, Mr. Lynne?"

The long lashes went up and the hazel  
eyes met his with very cool questioning.  
Surely this was any thing but an auspicious  
renewal of his wooing.

"Have you forgotten the relation we sus-  
tained down there at Beachcliff, Florien?  
I have not, and I can't endure to see you  
smiling on all the young puppies in the  
room with as much favor as you vouchsafe  
to me. Are you going to destroy my faith  
in woman's truth by letting my true love  
pay the forfeit of their meaningless callan-  
cies? Has my constancy deserved this?—  
eh, Florien?"

He must have the weight off his mind.  
Very much aggrieved he felt at the temerity  
of this dozen others ready to pay her court  
with the same degree of noble sentiment  
that had prompted him. He must know at  
once if there was any chance of her throw-  
ing him over at the last.

Florien laughed, with a tinge of her old  
irrepressible glee.

How like a novel, Walter! Only I  
never did imagine my hero in dress-coat and  
kids. Who hinted at destroying your faith  
and forfeiting your true love?—not I, surely.  
Don't make me feel what a gushing lit-  
tle simpleton I must have seemed in those  
days, and do remember that I have all the  
experience of eighteen months' of boarding-  
school existence since that. Of course I  
mean to abide by the promise I gave you  
then, but there's no need of framing it and  
hanging it up before me as the one rule of  
my walk through life. I believe I was  
meant to dance over the way. Shall we go  
back? Ah, there is some one to interrupt  
us. Mamma, is it not?"

It was mamma, with Aubrey Lessingham  
coming for his late presentation.

"What a search I've had, Florien. My  
daughter, Miss Redesdale, Mr. Lessingham.  
Mr. Lynne, some one was asking for you—  
Colonel Marquestone, I think. I promised  
to report you in due season."

Rather reluctantly Mr. Lynne resigned  
his place, offering his arm to Mrs. Rede-  
sdale, his shadow clouding his face, which had  
come at mention of Colonel Marquestone.  
They stood for a moment after Aubrey had  
gracefully acknowledged the favor confer-  
red upon him.

"They say you have waltzed with every  
dancing man in the room, Miss Redesdale,  
but I remain to complete the list. Won't  
you make the assertion good by a turn with  
me?"

She gave her silken flounces a shake and  
slipped her fingers within his arm, the at-  
tended a little startled ejaculation as her care-  
less gaze was caught and held by a face  
looking in through a window near them.

A pale, worn face, with disheveled black  
hair matted about it, and glittering, sunken  
eyes. It vanished almost instantly into the  
outer darkness.

"What was it—a ghost—Mrs. Rede-  
sdale?"

"A straggler, I think. I will send Thom-  
as to investigate the premises—I couldn't  
feel safe to have one hanging about."

A flash in the speaker's eyes did not bode  
well for the intruder—vagrant as he prob-  
ably was.

"Poor man!" said Florien, compassion-  
ately. "Let Thomas take him into the ser-  
vant's hall to warm himself, mamma. Think  
of any one being out this bitter night! I  
almost thought the face had a familiar look,  
though so haggard and worn."

"Some poor lonely wight,  
Shelterless, homeless quite—"

hummed Aubrey. "Your sentiments of  
hospitality do you honor, Miss Redesdale,  
but we are losing that glorious Strauss'  
waltz in discussing the poor wretch."

## CHAPTER XI.

## BEHIND THE SCENES.

MRS. REDESDALE saw her step-daughter  
emerge from the conservatory on young  
Lessingham's arm, and two minutes after-  
ward was herself back in that bower of ver-  
dure, bloom and warmth, while without the  
stars glimmered down coldly through the  
bitter air of the winter night.

She hurried down an aisle where a door  
opened upon a side veranda overlooking the  
street. She was without wraps of any  
kind, but the frosty chill which met her  
with the opening door scarcely caused a  
shiver. She paused, with a searching glance  
about her, which described the object of her  
search. A man leaning against a tree-box  
at a little distance, had his face turned to-  
ward the lighted windows. The shadow  
wrapped him about, obscuring his features,  
leaving his figure indistinct, but it was  
doubtless the straggler whose face for one  
moment had been outlined against the con-  
servatory window.

She glided noiselessly down the steps and  
laid her hand upon his arm.

"Louis, is it you?"

He turned, with a start, his white face  
seeming ghastly in that uncertain light.

"It is I, mother."

"Come away from here—we may be  
seen. This way—follow me."

She led him, but avoided all the bril-  
liantly-lighted rooms, where beauty and  
gayety flashed and sparkled under the gas-  
lights—where silks shimmered, and jewels  
burned, and bright eyes outshone even the  
gleams of gas and gems.

It was like running a gantlet to thread  
their way unseen through the mansion, all  
ablaze and thronged as it was, but it was  
successfully accomplished, and Mrs. Rede-  
sdale drew a breath of relief, as she opened  
a door and motioned him to pass into a  
small room in an obscure corner of the  
building, where a single dim light was  
burning. She entered after him and turned  
the key in the lock. She advanced to the  
center of the room and turned on the gas to  
a brilliant flame.

Standing in the flood of garish light, her  
velvet robe sweeping the floor in trailing  
folds, and marabout plumes nodding over  
her brow, she looked stately and imposing  
as any high-bred dame. She had blue-  
black satiny hair, sweeping back from a  
low, wide forehead; brows heavily arched  
over glittering black eyes; a square chin,  
a thin nostril, a complexion inclined to sal-  
lowness, but relieved by the vivid coloring  
of cheek and lip.

A young-looking woman to be called mo-  
ther by this vagabond—this seedy, woe-be-  
gone, wretched straggler.

Suffering and recent privations—perhaps  
worse—had stamped themselves upon his  
countenance, apparently adding to his  
years. The thin, smooth face turned gray  
and haggard, the black eyes sunken, with  
dark hollows underneath, the raven hair un-  
trimmed and uncombed, though changed,  
were unmistakably those of Louis Kenyon,  
the young landscape artist who had met  
Florien and her friend in their escape up-  
on the river, who had given lessons in  
Madame Molyneux's school a year before.

He dropped into a chair, his face turned  
in shadow, his relaxed muscles speaking of  
dejection and physical enervation. Mrs.  
Redesdale stood silent, her glittering eyes  
fixed upon his drooping figure, her lips  
compressed to a straight line, and the color  
upon her cheeks deepened to carmine.

He threw back his head with an im-  
patient gesture, and wheeled about to face  
her in another moment.

"Why don't you say something? Have-  
n't you a welcome for the prodigal in the  
midst of all this splendor? What a change  
for you, *ma mere*! Your private *salon* at  
the Astor House, where I had the pleasure  
of seeing you last, was elegant to be sure,  
but *this* is home. A change, certainly,  
from my first recollection, when my bonny  
mamma rattled a castanet to her dancing  
when the wheezy old organ was new. It  
had grown wheezy, you know, when I took  
to carrying it; but I'm speaking of the  
scarlet jacket, and gathered the pennies in  
my little velvet cap. I was a very monkey  
for agility, and so much prettier than a  
monkey, that I took amazingly."

"Louis!" He had been pouring out his  
words in a defiant, almost menacing way,  
the muscles about his mouth twitching ner-  
vously, and his wasted fingers plucking at  
the velvet upholstery of the chair in which  
he sat. He slunk away at the sound of  
her voice, under the blaze leaping up into  
her eyes.

"You would do well to forget that por-  
tion of your life," said she, coldly. "I am  
waiting an explanation of your long ab-  
sence—your singular silence. Some mo-  
thers would not have remembered their  
sons when lifted suddenly from poverty and  
obscurity to position and affluence. I re-  
cognized the duty owing to the 'bone of  
my bone, and flesh of my flesh,' and sent  
for you over a year ago, to point out an ad-  
mirable chance of stepping into a fortune,  
and consequent greatness—you had ambi-  
tious aims, I believe, in following your art.  
You very willingly accepted my advice,  
and the money I provided for your outfit;  
and from that day to this—more than a  
year's time—I have never seen you nor  
heard from you. Where have you been;  
what have you done? Your explanations  
must be brief if you make them now. I  
must go below before my absence is observ-  
ed and wondered at. Shall I show you to  
a room where you can rest, and hear what  
you have got to say for yourself in the  
morning?"

"No, you must hear me now." He  
seemed to be gathering resolution for some  
dreaded task. "I was here two weeks ago,  
but you had gone—up the river, somebody  
said."

"After Florien," interposed Mrs. Rede-  
sdale.

"Yes, I was disappointed. I was anxious  
—most anxious to see you at once. I was  
penniless. I was actually suffering for  
food; but I met Colonel Marquestone, and  
borrowed money from him for present ne-  
cessities. I—I mailed—some—of it to—a  
friend—I was bound to assist." He went

on quickly after that little hesitation: "I  
didn't mean to go near the dens, any of  
them, but I got drawn in—the old force of  
attraction was too strong. Well, I made  
something out of the small sum I had re-  
maining, and with money in my pockets, I  
couldn't stop there. I must have been  
crazy for ten days. I can't remember any  
thing that occurred within that time. I  
came to myself wandering about the streets,  
neglected, ragged, penniless, suffering.  
Somebody I knew gave me a dinner; but  
I'm not strong yet, as you can see. I set  
out to find you, and I've been hours in get-  
ting here. For the sake of Heaven, take  
your eyes off from me!—how can I tell you  
while you look at me in that way?"

"You have been tell-*g* me a great deal  
to very little purpose Louis. You came  
here, you borrowed some money, you gam-  
bled, and in that way made some more.  
Nothing very wrong in that. But you  
must follow it by a piece of youthful folly.  
You get started on an orgie, lose control of  
yourself, and wind up as I see. Not wise,  
Louis, after the precedent you have had.  
Liquor affects you in precisely the same man-  
ner it did your father, and he lost his life in  
a bar-room brawl."

"Be warned in time, my son, you can't  
stand dissipation. But all this has nothing  
to do with the mission you set out upon,  
more than a year ago. Did you perform it?"

"I think you scarcely need to ask me  
that."

"I take it that you have not. You have  
been wasting precious time, Louis. It is easy  
to win a race before other competitors have  
entered the ring."

"Ah, perhaps. I remember you explain-  
ed that when you sent me to woo and win  
Florien Redesdale when she was shut up in  
boarding-school—a good place to foster sen-  
timentality—away from the chance of other  
lovers. A silly school-girl would be apt to  
throw herself away on the first handsome  
scamp who put in for her. I daresay you  
were right enough in theory, but unfortun-  
ately for your plan, I was not the first."

She surveyed him incredulously.

"A chit like she is—you must be mista-  
ken. Oh, some rustic Apollo, perhaps, or  
some fisherman's son who has been made  
the hero of her childish fancy. She would  
be ready to replace him with a handsome  
and accomplished youth—yourself, to make  
it plain. First loves may be severe, but  
not lasting."

"I don't know anything about that. I  
made no attempt to rival the happy chosen  
one."

"You come to tell me that you deliber-  
ately disregarded my injunctions. It is  
hardly a plea to find favor now."

"I know it—with you," he answered,  
sulkily.

"I suppose you see the folly of your  
course—the wisdom of mine," went on  
Mrs. Redesdale. "You have thrown away  
your happiest opportunity, but all is not  
lost yet. That fact of a former lover is  
scarcely a drawback; girls always have  
ridiculous fancies and always get over  
them. The great difficulty is in having a  
half-score of others competing with you,  
but your father's son should be able to  
make his way to almost any woman's  
heart."

"Yes, I remember hearing the story of  
my father's conquest, though he hadn't  
much to gain by it. Love conquered with  
him, didn't it? Let me see—this is the  
way the narrative goes: Once upon a time  
a young Italian went tramping through the  
Canadas. His sole fortune was his face—  
rarely and darkly beautiful as only an  
Italian's can be—very much like my own,  
I have been told. Not as mine must ap-  
pear just now; I am aware it must suffer  
from its unshorn and unwashed state. His  
sole fortune, I say, was his face and the or



time carried with me the wheezy old organ, which had been preserved and stored away at my request. As might be expected, I fell in with theatrical people. I took lessons at scene-painting, and finding that I really had some talent, got admission to a studio where I could study the works of noted artists, and the proprietor, who was an eccentric genius, gave me some valuable hints and found me some notable patrons, so I rose to my enviable position of landscape artist. Just as I attained it, you—whom I had lost sight of for years—turned up like the fairy godmother of a children's tale.

"You have been in Australia, you say. My step-papa had the bad taste to die there, and with your usual economy of time, you had listened to replace him. But Australia must be a poor land for matrimonial investments; the third husband also dies, before the term of your bridehood has expired.

"This time, you are left in a responsible position. The last 'dear departed' has been a man of wealth and influence. He leaves a daughter whom he has not seen since her infancy, but to whom he has willed the greater part of his wealth. With commendatory zeal you determine to act a mother's part toward the bereaved young girl. To carry out the programme more effectively, you search out the son of your early marriage and inform him that he shall woo the beautiful heiress, win her love, gain her wealth, and—share the latter with you."

"Go on," said Mrs. Redesdale, as he paused. "If you insist upon reviewing the whole field, pray do it as rapidly as possible. You are now, unless I am very much mistaken, reaching your starting-point."

"Worthy mother, I am done—with that subject."

"Then I must really insist upon another interview. Go to some quiet hotel to-night, and I will send you the means to make yourself presentable. Take time—a week if need be—to recover from the effects of your late imprudence. Then come, and I think, with my influence exerted, you may yet carry off the prize."

"She made a motion to reach the door, but he rose to throw himself directly in her way."

"Mother, wait. There is more which you must hear. You will have to give up your scheme—your hope of marrying Florin and me. I went up the Hudson at your request; I succeeded in meeting Miss Redesdale, but she was not alone; she had with her one of her school-girl friends. Afterward I gained admittance to the school as teacher of landscape-drawing, and I loved—not Florin, but her friend."

"Mother, if there is such a thing as affection—*platonic* in that hard heart of yours, don't turn from me now. I am wedded to the girl that I love, and this is the anniversary of our marriage-night."

"He threw back his head and looked her squarely in the eyes now."

"The color went out of her face, leaving it like gray stone. Only her eyes contracted until their brightness was merged in a fierce gleam."

"Who is the creature—the girl, I mean?"

"There was not a trace of emotion in her voice."

"Mother, she is an angel if ever an angel lived and breathed. Poor Isa—dear little Isa! You can't help loving her if you see her once."

"An angel and an artist—happy alliance!"

"You are not angry, and I was so fearful. You will not refuse to help me and my poor little wife? She is ill, she had to endure privations she is not fit to bear. She has suffered for food and fire sometimes, she is suffering now for careful attendance. Oh, my mother! when you tell me that you forgive me, that you will not turn against us, I will be the happiest man on the face of this earth."

"The light that broke over his face as he spoke of his young wife fairly transfigured it. A sob rose in his throat, but he choked it down; a moisture, filling his eyes left them tender and dreamy; his lips wore that sweet smile which was the reflex of happiness now."

"Who is she, I ask?"

"Her name?—it was Isola Snow."

"Isola Snow!" The proud woman staggered back, and to his dying day Louis Kenyon would never forget the expression of her face. Malignant as the devilish inspiration of a fallen spirit. The wicked thought which she afterward acted upon occurred to her then, and its very evil force overpowered her for a second."

"She grasped the back of a chair and steadied herself, not moving her eyes from his face."

"Isola Snow!" she repeated, almost in a whisper. "Where is she now, this wife of yours?"

"In an old fishwoman's cabin down on the Jersey coast. I did some sketching there, but we were miserably poor and I could make but little. Isola fell ill there, and I was left no choice as to what to do to you. If you will help me now, I will some day repay all the expense you may incur. I shall work for her sake as I have never worked before, and I must—shall succeed."

"She glanced at him—his haggard face so lighted now, his disheveled hair, his threadbare, soiled, disordered clothes."

"He understood her and colored with shame."

"It didn't mean to give way to temptation," said he, humbly. "It is the first time for more than a year, and my only excuse is the agony of apprehension. I was suffering. It is unmanly to confess it, but I feared to meet you, *ma mere*. But you will help me?"

"Very humbly, very pleadingly, very eagerly, were the last words spoken."

"Mrs. Redesdale did not answer for a moment. She put up her hand to shade her eyes and studied his face."

"If you will go to some quiet place and recruit yourself, I will go down to the coast sometime during the week and have her removed and cared for."

"You will?" Such concession was more than he had hoped, his delight was almost incredulous. "I have been unjust to you in thought, mother, but if you do it I will bless you forever. Only, I should like to take her the good news."

"If I am boundful you must let me be so in my own manner. Isola Snow, you said. I think I knew her parent. No. 53 of the Foundling Hospital, a female child, name unknown, adopted by Mrs. Isola Snow, Widow."

"Oh!" with a gasp. "You know that—do you know more?"

"Ask no questions. Can't you be contented now?"

"More than that—happy and grateful."

A little later, Mrs. Redesdale went back to her guests, unruffled and complacent as though she had not just passed through a trying scene.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 149.)

## A Strange Girl: A NEW ENGLAND LOVE STORY.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN.  
AUTHOR OF THE "WOLF DEMON," "OVERLAND KIT," "RED MAZEPPA," "AGE OF SPADES," "HEART OF FIRE," "WITCHES OF NEW YORK," ETC., ETC.

### CHAPTER XXXIII.

#### THE PICNIC.

THE morning of July Fourth came bright and beautiful. As it was a holiday, and the mills were all closed, a picnic had been gotten up, and about eight o'clock it started for the sea-shore.

All sorts and kinds of vehicles, from an omnibus down to a hay wagon, had been called into action, and a motley party, full of life and fun, drove down to the beach.

As it was low tide, some of the male members of the party, headed by Jerry Gardner, proceeded to dig for clams, it being the intention to have a mammoth clam-bake.

The head-quarters of the picnic had been fixed in a small grove of stunted pines, which afforded some little shelter from the sun.

Others of the party strolled up and down the beach. Lydia, who had been persuaded to join the picnic party by Mr. Gardner, although she took but little interest in such pleasures, had wandered off by herself, and finding a secluded spot among the rocks, from which she could command a full view of the ocean, sat down, and gave herself up to reflections, which were rather sad than joyful.

Supporting her fair cheek upon her hand, she gazed out upon the broad ocean, now as calm as a sea of crystal, and watched the distant white sails which, like great sea-birds, hovered on the surface of the dark green wave.

With a soft and gentle motion the tide swelled up and down against the edges of the shelving rocks, and the sea-weed swayed on the surface of the tide, glimmering in the sunbeams, with a free and joyous motion, as though it loved the kiss and caress of the dark ocean waves.

The girl looked down into the green, half-transparent water as it rose and fell around the jagged rocks, singing a gentle lullaby.

The sound of the swelling waves seemed to lull her unquiet soul to sweet forgetfulness.

"There is peace and rest," she murmured, as she looked down into the water's depths. "A single plunge—the waves would close over me, and I should find forgetfulness. I never understood till now the feeling which urges the poor, weak mortal to commit suicide. In the world all is trouble and strife; there in the ocean waves is rest. I do not wonder that some grow weary of their burdens sometimes, and cast them aside; I would have died, too, if they had let me, but I was weak, sick, not fully conscious of what I was doing. I did not reason, but acted."

And by the side of the ocean, resting on the hard rocks for full four hours, the girl remained. She was not conscious of the flight of time.

The sight of the swelling wave was a balm to her disturbed mind; the sea-breeze and the fragrant incense rising from the salty waters seemed to inspire her with new life.

"Full many a gem of purest ray serene,  
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear;  
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,  
And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

Lydia recognized the voice at once. She looked up in astonishment and beheld Sinclair Paxton standing on the rock just above her head.

She had been so occupied in her dreamy meditation that she had not heard him approach.

"Splendid, isn't it?" he cried, joyously, springing down to her side. "You seem lost in meditation. The party are at luncheon; they missed you, and so I volunteered to go in search of you."

"I did not know that you were coming," the girl said, a lighted color in her cheeks, but she kept her eyes fixed upon the ground and avoided his gaze.

"To the picnic?"

"Oh, I fully intended to come. I had some letters to write this morning, and that detained me a little, so that I was not able to start with the rest. I drove down to where I keep my boat, and then came down in her. There she is now." And he pointed seaward.

"See that sail-boat rounding the point of the island and standing in toward shore?"

"Yes," the girl answered, shading her eyes with her hand and gazing out to sea.

"That's the Pearl—that's my boat, you know."

"Yes," the girl responded, absently; her thoughts were elsewhere.

"You promised me once that you would take a sail with me. I shall call upon you to keep that promise before we go home to-night."

"No, no, I can't!" the girl cried, quickly.

The expression upon Sinclair's face changed instantly; the joyous look faded, and an anxious light appeared in his eyes.

"You can't go?" he said, slowly; "why not?"

"Because, if I go with you, people will talk about it; even now they couple our names together. It is not right for them to do so. There is nothing in common between you and me, nor can there ever be; let us then go on our separate paths through the world without regard to each other."

"Lydia, why do you speak in this cruel way? Have I deserved it?"

"No, no!" she cried, quickly, and her voice trembled with emotion; "to me you have ever been kind and good. Do not blame me! It is fate that speaks when I say that in the future we must be as strangers to each other. We can not be friends; that is impossible; it is too dangerous for both of us. We can not be friends without being lovers."

"Is not this a sudden resolution?" he asked, in wonder, hardly able as yet to comprehend the full extent of the blow.

"Yes, I have struggled against it, but it must be."

Lydia, you must take a sail with me this afternoon, for I have publicly said that you were going to do so. One of my friends wished the loan of the boat and I refused him, pleading a prior engagement with you. If you do not go, it will give rise to vastly more gossip than if you do go," he said, gravely.

"Well, I will go then. I will enjoy the pleasure of your company one little hour longer, and then we must say good-by."

The eyes of the girl were wet with tears as she uttered the words.

"I trust that you will reconsider your determination."

She shook her head mournfully.

And just at that moment a party of three came over the rocks.

There was Jerry and Delia, hand in hand, and old Daddy Embden and Mrs. Gardner bringing up the rear.

"Hullo! here they are, arter all!" Jerry exclaimed, as he beheld the two. "The folks thought that you were lost, Sinclair!"

"Oh, no," Paxton answered, pleasantly, no trace of the painful scene through which he had just passed upon his face.

Lydia rose to her feet, but there was a tinge of color in her cheeks and a trace of moisture about her eyes which did not escape the sharp look of Delia.

Lydia adjusted the straw hat—which she had held idly in her hand—upon her head, and turned to go, when Daddy Embden, who had just clambered up the flat rock upon which the party were gathered, uttered a sharp cry of alarm, and went down on the rocks all in a heap.

"He's got a fit!" Jerry yelled.

The tramp in the hot sun has been too much for the old man," Jerry whispered to Sinclair.

"He's gittin' better," Mrs. Gardner said. Slowly the old man opened his eyes and looked into Lydia's face, bent down over him.

"Do you alive?" he asked, faintly and mysteriously.

"He don't know what he's sayin'," Mrs. Gardner said, confidently.

"This is Miss Grame, father," Delia explained.

"Grame! Grame!" he muttered, evidently in doubt.

"Yes; do you feel better now?" Lydia asked.

"Oh, yes, I'm better," he replied, slowly, his mind evidently in a fog.

Then the two men assisted him to his feet. The old sailor was fast becoming himself again.

"Did you hurt yourself, father, when you fell?" the daughter asked.

"No—no," the old man replied, dubiously, as if he wasn't exactly sure of the fact.

The little party took their way back to the grove. Old Embden, though he had fully recovered his strength, seemed greatly puzzled at something, and kept muttering slowly to himself as he walked along.

After the clam-bake had been served up and discussed, the party broke up into some dozen or so little groups, each bent on some particular amusement, while Sinclair and Lydia got into the sail-boat and drifted slowly out to sea.

### CHAPTER XXXIV.

#### AT LAST.

THE breeze was but a gentle zephyr, scarcely stirring the surface of the water, and the little sail-boat which held Paxton and Lydia, made but slow progress.

The tide, too, being on the flood, was against them, a fact which Sinclair noticed and remarked upon.

"We shall have to beat up against an ebb-tide when we return," he said. And looking at his watch, he was astonished to discover that it was after five.

"The afternoon has passed very rapidly," he remarked.

"Yes," Lydia answered, vacantly, gazing wistfully out upon the broad ocean.

The sun had already begun to lose its power, and was sinking slowly down toward the line of the purple horizon.

Afar off in the distance, a slight breeze was rippling the surface of the water.

Paxton was at the helm, while Lydia sat a foot or so from him on the side of the boat.

The young man cast his eyes around the horizon.

"You dark cloud promises a capful of wind," he said, pointing to a little white speck to the north-east, hardly bigger than a man's hand.

"It is a very small cloud to bring with it much wind," she observed, watching the distant speck.

"I've seen a cloud no bigger than that one at first, and an hour's time produced a gale of wind which would try the stanchness of the stoutest ship that ever swam on the ocean."

"You have been a sailor, I believe?"

"Yes; how did you know that?" he asked in some little surprise.

"There are very few things connected with your life, known to the inhabitants of Biddeford, which I do not know," she replied, a smile stealing over her face.

"I suppose that they thought I ought to know all about you. I mean, they all acted as if it was the most natural thing in the world for me to take an interest in all that related to you in any way."

"Lydia, now I am going to speak very plainly to you, and I hope you will be equally frank in return," he said, suddenly.

"I will try to be so," she replied, keeping her now pale face averted from him, and dipping her hand carelessly in the water, that was surging past the side of the boat.

"Well, tell me *why* we must be as strangers to each other?"

"Have I not already told you?" she responded, with tremulous accent.

"Tell me over again, then," he said, quietly. "I wish to be sure that I really know your reasons."

"Can you not spare me this task?" she asked, imploringly; "it is very painful."

"Not more painful for you to speak than for me to listen, he replied, firmly. "You yourself have said that this is to be our last meeting. Your will is law to me. Whatever you wish, shall be. I have but one request to make to you."

"And what is that?" she demanded in wonder, for the first time turning her eyes upon him.

"I love you; give me a remedy for that love."

"Why, how can I?"

"Tell me the reasons why you say that we must be as strangers to each other, and perhaps one of them may be the remedy," he replied, very quietly; but there was something in his voice which grated unpleasantly upon her ears; it seemed like an accusation.

"Since you force me to speak, listen, then," she said, speaking with a coolness which she was far from feeling. "Your station in life and mine are widely apart. You are rich and I am poor. Should I marry you, I should always feel that I am under an obligation to you."

"That is reason No. 1?"

"Yes."

"Now I'll answer it." He took his pocket-book from his breast-pocket and opened it; from it he took a check. "See, Lydia," he said, "there is my last month's salary, with the exception of a dollar or two in my pocket. It is all the money I have about me. In a second I will be for the present as poor as you, for thus I tear the check up and throw it into the sea."

Deliberately he tore the check in half, but Lydia, bending forward, caught his arm and looked reproachfully in his face.

"Oh, Sinclair, it is wicked to do that!" she cried.

"To destroy this money?"

"Yes."

"Why? Of what use is money, except to buy things with? To the shipwrecked sailor, cast away on some desert island, in the far-off southern ocean, gold is as worthless as the sand beneath his feet. If by destroying my wealth I can purchase you, whom I prize as the wrecked seaman would the sight of the little sail which promises rescue and home, to what better use can I put my money?"

"I can not answer you," the girl said, and again she laid her hand in the green waters bubbling past the boat.

"Well, your second reason?" and he crumpled the torn check up and thrust it into his vest pocket.

"I do not think that I am worthy to be your wife!" The words came with effort from her lips, and her bosom heaved with strong emotion.

"But *why* are you not?—give me a reason. What have you ever done?"

"I can not tell you," she murmured, lowly, and the hot face was covered by the little hands.

"Lydia, if there was a reason, I think you could tell me," he said, slowly.

There was a long and painful silence. The sun came nearer and nearer to the horizon line; the little white cloud afar off in the north-east grew larger and larger, and on the broad ocean, a mile or so beyond the headland of Wood Island, the white-crested billows began to roll and toss like jolly monsters of the deep.

"Well, have you finished?" he asked, finding that she did not speak.

"No," she said, and the usually soft and gentle voice was hoarse and strained; "there is another reason."

"Say it!"

"Do not love you."

The two mortals within that little sail-boat, who sat staring at each other with white faces, seemed more like statues carved out of marble, than humans hot with the breath of life.

"You do not love me?" he said, slowly, and the lips that spoke were colorless, and the eyes that looked the question, fixed and glaring.

The girl could not speak. Vainly she attempted to reply, but though the lips moved, no sound came from them; a moment or so the breath came in gasps from between the white lips, and then, with a sigh, she sunk down in the bottom of the boat.

She had fainted.

Forgotten now were all her cruel words; forgotten now was the white squall coming so rapidly on, the wind lashing the quiet waves into white-capped monsters of destruction.

Paxton thought only of the fair young girl whom he loved better than he did his own life, and who lay senseless upon the bottom of the boat.

Quickly he sprang to her and lifted the helpless form in his arm.

The moment he quitted the tiller, the boat swung round, and the squall struck her.

Snap went the mast close to the deck, and canvas and broken wood came down upon the lovers.

The boat shipped a heavy sea, then righted; 'twas but a wreck, now, though, drifting away at the mercy of the wind and waves.

The "Pearl" was an excellent sea-boat, and the sudden breakage of the mast had saved her from a capsizing. The first fury of the blow had been the worst; and even now the wind seemed shorn of half its strength.

The heavy sea that had poured into the boat had almost drowned the lovers, from head to foot.

One good effect it had produced, though; it had revived the girl, from her faint.

"What has happened?" she asked, as she looked around and saw the wreck. She was held tightly to Sinclair's breast, and she made no effort to free herself.

"A sudden gust of wind snapped the mast, and we are drifting out to sea," he answered.

"Are we in danger, then?"

"Yes."

"And we may both die here on the ocean together?" she asked.

"Then, since death is near, I take back the falsehood that my lips uttered but a moment since. I do love you! I love you better than any thing else in all the wide world! You are my king—my life; and I can die here happy on your breast, feeling but your kisses pressed upon my lips!" she cried, passionately.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 149.)

## OLD SOLITARY, The Hermit Trapper: OR, THE DRAGON OF SILVER LAKE.

BY OLL COOMBS.  
AUTHOR OF "HAWKEYE HARRY," "BOY SPY," "IRONSIDES, THE SCOUT," "DEATH-NOTCH, THE DESTROYER," ETC., ETC.

### CHAPTER XVII.

#### A FEARFUL ENCOUNTER.

WHEN Harry Thomas saw the savages pass within five feet of him with his darling little Mildred a captive, he could scarcely restrain the emotions of agony that arose in his breast. In fact, the feelings of all were aroused to the highest pitch of excitement and fear, for the prize object in the two women there told them that the savages had been at Mound Prairie, and had, in all probability, destroyed the settlement.

"What shall we do, boys?" asked young Thomas; "follow them and attempt the girls' rescue?"

"It will be useless, Harry, for there are scores of Indians within hailing distance of this spot. We will have to hunt up Old Solitary, and let his superior judgment direct us in this matter. You see, if we were to attack them and be defeated, the girls' rescue will be hopeless, and if we should even be successful, we would be hunted down by others that would be called to the spot by the sound of the conflict. If we knew exactly what we could do, then we might follow and attempt their rescue."

"Yes, yes, Burt, you are right," replied Harry; "but it is hard to sit still and see the red hellsions carrying away innocent girls. And I am afraid, boys, Mound Prairie is in ashes, and our friends all dead, or taken captives."

While this conversation was going on, the captives were being conveyed further and further away. They went until their eyes were red and swollen. Their hearts seemed utterly crushed, and they sobbed in each other's arms like children. After their capture they had been placed upon ponies and hurried rapidly away until the lake was reached. Here the animals were given over to a part of the savages, while the others took to the water, their object in this, perhaps, was to throw any one disposed to follow them off the trail. By their hard ride, the women had been nearly exhausted, and it seemed to them as though they would never survive the hardships of that night.

The savage that was piloting the canoe, with the captives, through the forest of reeds, permitted the craft to come to a stand when a few rods past the young hunters.

They all listened, as only savages can listen, without breathing or moving a muscle. They heard nothing, but from their actions one would judge they suspected the presence of danger within the reeds. If this was the case, they must have drawn their inference from the deathlike stillness that hung over the lake at this juncture, for not even the rustle of a reed, nor chirp of an insect could be heard.

When the savage pilot had ceased listening, he turned and held a short consultation with his companions regarding their



Half a dozen tomahawks were raised aloft to brain the trapper, but, before they could descend, he grasped the canoe by the gunwale, and, tiding it from him, precipitated every warrior into the lake.

Now began a desperate struggle in the water, the young settlers coming into the fray. The savages rallied and engaged the whites without attempting to climb back into their canoe. Old Solitary again brought his iron fist into play, while the settlers with clubbed rifles ran their canoe into the midst of the combatants, and began to play right and left.

The next moment the air was filled with flying spray, savage yells, the dull, sudden sound of blows and the plashing of water, and, too, the ring and clank of steel, the shrieks of the wounded, the gasping of straggling savages, and the roar of Old Solitary's lion voice made the moment a fearful one.

The conflict lasted scarcely two minutes. The savages were defeated and driven away into the reeds, while, with a shout of triumph, Old Solitary threw himself into one of the deserted canoes, an act which required great skill and agility.

But where was Lone Heart? where were Ethel and Mildred? They were nowhere within the glade.

"Ay!" exclaimed Old Solitary, "Lone Heart, the Chippewa, has made good his escape with the women. Come, lads, follow me and we'll soon find 'em!" Ah, there goes the Chippewa's call now!

Old Solitary headed the canoe westward, and entered one of the narrow trails. He was closely followed by the settlers, and in a few minutes they had cleared the forest of reeds and were coasting along the western shore.

A few minutes' journeying in this direction and the old trapper turned the prow of his canoe toward the bank, and, parting some heavy foliage before him, disappeared from sight. The young settlers followed his example, and the next instant found themselves within a dark, subterranean passage of water extending back under the bank. Guided by the dip of Old Solitary's paddle they followed on, and on rounding a slight angle in the passage, the glow of fire burst suddenly upon their view.

It was burning on the ground where the passage led up out of the water by what seemed a pair of rude steps. It was at the head of these steps where the fire was burning, and within its light our friends saw three persons. Two of them were females, the other an Indian warrior. The former were seated near the fire, while the latter was standing near the head of the steps, his plumed head bent in the attitude of listening.

As they drew nearer the fire, our friends saw that the females were Ethel Leland and Mildred Fayville, and their companion, the Chippewa, Lone Heart.

A minute more and they had landed and joined the trio, their meeting being attended with great joy and happiness.

A few minutes later another person was added to the party.

It was Jabez Dart, detective.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

## A RIPE OF SUNSHINE.

From the lips of Ethel, the young hunters soon learned that Mound Prairie had not been attacked by savages up to the time of their capture, and from Jabez Dart they learned that there were no apprehensions of an attack being made. How Dart had obtained this information they were at a loss to know, for they were entirely ignorant of his having been to Mound Prairie since their separation on the east side of the lake.

During their conversation, it was noticed by more than one that Lone Heart's eyes were almost constantly feasting, with a strange expression in their dark depths, upon the fair sad face of Ethel Leland. Ethel caught his glances more than once, but she experienced no uneasiness for she accorded his action to that open admiration so characteristic of the Indian.

After a while Old Solitary and Dart stepped aside and conversed a few minutes in an undertone. On rejoining the party, the old trapper said:

"Friends, we're not entirely safe here, for the skulkin' red-skins are thick as bees about this lake. Now, me and Lone Heart here, are goin' out to make a scout. We may be back in an hour and we may not, but of all you do, keep a close watch out at the mouth of the cave."

"We'll do it, Solitary," said Dart.

The old trapper and the Chippewa descended the rude steps and entered a canoe, and the next minute they were lost from view in the darkness of the watery cavern.

Bart Stanley was sent to the entrance to keep guard until they came back, while our friends in the cavern seated themselves composedly about the fire, and entered into a discussion of the dangers and troubles of the night.

Jabez Dart was unusually communicative, and when Lone Heart came in as a feature of their conversation, he said:

"I've been in this cavern before, friends. It's the home of Lone Heart, the Chippewa. He's got a snug little parlor back in one of the chambers, where he sleeps, cooks and so on. He came here about five years ago, I think, under the most trying circumstances, and thereby hangs a tale which I'll tell you just to kill time while the trapper and the Chippewa are out."

"Yes, certainly," said he by all means, "Dart," said Harry Thomas, who was seated by Millie's side on the opposite side of the fire.

"Well," began Dart, assuming an attitude of ease, "about six years ago a young man, whom I will call Dick, at present, was traveling in Europe. Now Dick was a wayward youth and not altogether strictly honest. He was ambitious, and yet given to gambling and so forth. Now, Dick was in the south of Scotland, when he learned of the decease of the last of the lineal descendants of the grand old estate of—well, I will call it Bonny Lassie. Who would now inherit Bonny Lassie? was the question, for the last proprietor had died without making a will. But, upon looking over some of the family records, it was found that, some twenty years previous, a young man whom I will dub Scott, emigrated to America, he being a distant relative of the house of Bonny Lassie, and so he would fall heir to the estate.

"But, who knew whether Scott was in America or Greenland? or whether he was alive at all?"

"Well, Dick, our American tourist, heard of all this hubbub about Bonny Lassie and Scott, the heir. As luck would have it, he knew exactly where Scott was in America—he was acquainted with him, and the

devil took possession of his heart, and he resolved to make a fortune out of his knowledge—if not, indeed, obtain possession of Bonny Lassie. So straightway he went to those whom the law had appointed to administer on the estate, and told them a very systematic falsehood. He told them he believed he knew where Scott was, and offered to hunt him up and send him forth with a posse of the Bonny Lassie. Of course the apparently learned and gentlemanly American tourist was intrusted with this mission.

"Dick returned post-haste to America, and found that Scott and his wife were both dead, but they had a lovely daughter—whom I'll call Margery—living, and who of course came next heir to Bonny Lassie. Instead of Dick telling Margery of her foreign wealth, he set to work to win her affections and marry her, so that he could share her fortune with her, and no telling what crime lurked back of this resolve. But the scamp had a rival to contend with; Margery had a lover, whom I'll call Jack, for short. Dick resolved not to give up such a glorious chance for a rich wife, and so, with three accomplices, he concocted a wicked affair which I will call The Tragedy. The consequence was, Jack had to leave the country, and this left the field clear for Dick to win Margery's love. But Margery wasn't so easily won as the rascal anticipated, and for five years he has been laying siege to the invulnerable barrier of her heart."

"Humph!" exclaimed Harry, "I would think the Bonny Lassie administrators would get tired waiting his return with the heir."

"That is the point to which I had just come," continued Dart. "One of Dick's accomplices in The Tragedy got shot in a drunken brawl in New York, about a year ago, and while dying, he put me in possession of the story which I've narrated to you. So I went to Scotland and traced the Bonny Lassie matter up to this lake. You see, Jack, after The Tragedy, fled the country, came West, and took up his abode in this cavern."

"And now you're after him, eh?"

"No; I have come to establish his innocence in The Tragedy, and in order that you may understand me better, I will be more explicit in the names of the parties connected with my story. To begin with, the Scotland estate is known as Wolcain Heights; Dick, the American tourist, and rascal, you know as Captain Roland Disbrow, and—"

An exclamation of surprise burst from the lips of some of the party, at mention of the last name.

"And," continued Dart, "the heir to the Heights, whom we have called Scott, was called Robert Leland, and his daughter Margery is none other than she who sits before you—Ethel Leland."

Another cry of surprise burst from the lips of all the party except Ethel's. She had already been made acquainted with Disbrow's nefarious designs by the detective.

"Well," continued Dart, "The Tragedy was known to all of you in Ohio as the Hart's Ford murder, and Jack, the inhabitant of this cave, was Frank Hammond, who was accused of the supposed murder."

"Supposed murder?" exclaimed Harry; "then there was no murder done at Hart's Ford?"

"No. It was a 'put up thing.' Disbrow hired Frank Hammond, the supposed murdered man, to leave the country, and then he had two more to swear in court that they saw Hammond murder Hohn."

"But there was a body found that was identified as Hohn's, by the peculiar suit he always wore," said one of the party, to whom the Hart's Ford murder was well known.

"Oh, yes, certainly," replied Dart, "but the rascals robbed the grave for the body. You doubtless remember about that time one James Cross was crushed in a canal lock. It was his body, as the dying accomplice said, that was taken from the grave, dressed in Hohn's clothes, and taken to the river near Hart's Ford."

"Then this cavern is Frank Hammond's retreat?"

"Yes."

"I would like to see Frank," said Harry; "where is he now?"

"You have already seen him," said Dart; "he went out with Old Solitary. Lone Heart, the Chippewa, is Frank Hammond."

A cry burst from Ethel's lips. This much to her had been unknown. She had seen Lone Heart, yet his Indian disguise had been effectual, even to her eyes.

To the whole party the story was quite apparent now, and they had again begun its discussion, when a shout from the guard at the entrance came rolling through the cavern.

"Come, come, every one of you!" exclaimed Dart; "we must leave here—quick!"

Without adding a word, the party followed the detective to the foot of the steps, to the water's edge, where they embarked for the mouth of the cavern. Arrived there, they ran alongside of Stanley, the guard, and Dart asked:

"What's the matter?"

"Look! look!" replied Stanley, pointing out upon the moonlit lake.

Every eye was turned in the direction indicated, and first saw a canoe, with two occupants, flying with great speed across the lake. The occupants were Indians. They were Waucoasta and Great Wolf, and as they sped on over the lake, they glanced back over their shoulders with apparent terror, and well they might; for, close behind in hot pursuit of them, was the Monster of the Lake!

A cry of horror burst from the lips of Ethel and Mildred, but Jabez Dart assured them there was nothing to fear.

The Monster doubled on the savages at every stroke of its wing-like fins, and suddenly its sharp breast struck the stern of the canoe, pitching it forward on its beam's end, and throwing the savages out into the water.

Then the Monster came to a halt, and the next moment our friends saw the head and shoulders of a man appear out of the back of the dragon! A loud, triumphant laugh came echoing across the water, as the man continued to rise from out the Monster, until the full proportions of a large man were visible. A rifle was in his hands, and no sooner did his eyes catch sight of the struggling savages than he raised the weapon and fired. The sullen boom of the piece, mingled with the death-wail of Great Wolf, came over the water. Then the man assumed a position astride of the Monster, which tacked about and dart-

ed toward Waucoasta, who was endeavoring to climb into his canoe.

"Surrender, Waucoasta!" yelled the man aboard the Monster; "surrender, or you shall die!"

Waucoasta heeded not his words, but strove harder than ever to get into his canoe. But the next instant the dragon ran alongside of him, a pair of strong hands grasped the chief, lifted him from the water, and threw him across the back of the Monster, thereby rendering him perfectly helpless.

"Ho, for the cavern, Spirit of the Monster!" shouted Waucoasta's captor, "to feed your ghoul's jaws on Waucoasta's flesh!"

The Monster turned, and started directly toward the mouth of the cavern where our friends were.

"Oh, it is coming here!" cried Millie, in the greatest fear.

"Let it come, Millie," replied Dart; "the Monster of the Lake is nothing but a cunningly-contrived boat. But, let us hasten back to the fire, for those aboard the Monster are our friends, and they have a prisoner."

The party turned and hastened back to the fire. They had scarcely landed when the light of the camp-fire showed them the Monster approaching along the channel, and astir of its back was Old Solitary, with Waucoasta lying before him, a prisoner.

"We've got the beauty, boys," shouted the old trapper. "Jist step down and take charge of him. The paint's all washed from his countenance, and you'll readily recognize the critter."

Dart and two of the hunters stepped down to the water's edge, as the Monster came to the landing, and took the prisoner in charge.

No sooner did Dart's eyes fall upon his face, from which the paint had been washed, than he exclaimed:

"Yes, sir! it's my man, Hank Hohn! Friends, this proves that the Hart's Ford murder was all a farce, and Frank Hammond is an innocent man, for here we have the supposed murdered man."

"I've known that these five years," returned Hohn, the renegade chief, Waucoasta, with a defiant leer; "the captain gave me a nice sum to leave the diggin's, and come west, I rot in among the red-skins, and got to be a big bug 'mong 'em. Now do you think you please with me, gentlemen, if you think I'm guilty of crime?"

"Never mind your gab now, Hohn; I'll tend to your case," replied Dart.

At this juncture, Ethel, who had been watching the Monster with a kind of fascination, saw its back part, as if upon hinges, and the form of Lone Heart appear from the opening.

A cry burst from her lips, and she started toward him, for now she could see that Lone Heart was her darling Frank Hammond!

(To be continued—commenced in No. 147.)

The Rock Rider:  
OR,  
THE SPIRIT OF THE SIERRA.

## A TALE OF THE THREE PARKS.

BY FREDERICK WHITTAKER.

AUTHOR OF "THE RED RAJAH," "THE KNIGHT OF THE RUBIES," "DOUBLE-DEATH," ETC., ETC.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## A SHOOTING EXPERIMENT.

WHEN Belcour turned round, it was with the deliberate purpose of shooting his very best. All the nervous excitement which usually disturbed his aim seemed to have vanished in the crisis. He knew well the life and death lay in his steadiness now.

Belcour walked off up the pass, carrying the girl, till a jutting rock hid them from view in the valley, and then the intelligent creature halted, and waited for his master, as quietly as if he understood the necessity. Meantime Belcour called to mind all the instructions he had received from Brinkerhoff on the subject of shooting, and knelt down on one knee to steady his aim, resting his left elbow on his knee.

At the sight of the presented rifle, the Indians halted instantaneously, and every man dodged behind his horse.

Belcour took a steady, careful aim, but it seemed to him that the fore sight of his rifle had never trembled so much before. He knew that if he fired now, every shot must tell or be wasted.

With a coolness that did him credit, he deliberately sat down on the ground with his knees up in front, rested his elbow on the left knee, and took a fresh sight. To his great joy there was a perceptible increase of steadiness. The muzzle sight of the rifle ceased to tremble, and he felt that he could depend on his aim. It was a good lesson that he was learning in a grim school.

In the midst of the Indians was a particularly handsome spotted mustang, which he thought must be the mount of a chief, and he took a steady aim at the animal, for a lump sticking out of its side told him that an Indian was hanging there.

Crack! went the rifle, and Belcour watched for the effect of his shot with eager anxiety.

He uttered an exclamation of exultation as the spotted mustang reared up with a squeal, wheeled round and ran away, while the dark figure of its rider fell to the earth in full view, and lay there motionless.

"I have done it at last," he muttered. "Now I know how to shoot."

But the sound of his shot had roused the Indians. With one accord they uttered a loud yell, and sprung up on their horses to make a dash up the pass. The young man hastily crammed a fresh cartridge into the breech of his rifle, and leveled it once more.

Every Indian halted as if struck by lightning, and ducked down.

One of them fired a hasty shot, and the bullet struck the rock by Belcour's side. It was answered by the crack of the young man's rifle, and the Indian threw up his arms and fell from his horse.

"Again!" said Belcour, delighted. "I must be growing a famous shot."

He crammed in another cartridge, as the Indians made a fresh rush, and again they halted as he leveled his piece.

Then Belcour rose up, confident and smiling.

"I have mastered the secret," he muttered. "One must keep cool and attend to the sight. That is the whole science of shooting."

Slowly he retreated up the pass, halting every now and then to present his rifle and threaten the Indians, who began to follow him again at a respectful distance.

Once or twice one of them fired a shot, but their aim being taken from horseback, was hurried and uncertain compared to his own, and he was unhurt.

Very soon he reached the jutting rock, behind which Belcour was stationed, and felt safe.

As soon as he had disappeared, however, the Indians, seeming to think him gone, came rushing up the pass. Belcour leaned his rifle on the rock, and shot down the foremost without difficulty, through the heart.

In a moment the Indians were down again and halted, while Belcour could see them, himself unseen all but the head. A second shot from his cover killed a horse, and caused a quick retreat of the Indians to a safer distance, when a spiteful rain of bullets came skipping over the rocks all round his head.

He kept remarkably cool, considering his general impetuosity, and replied at intervals, sheltering himself behind the outer edge of the jutting rocks, where his head was all that was visible.

After a few such shots he began to think over some way of escape, for it evidently would not do to stay there till night. He tried a ruse, therefore, leaving his hat to represent him, while he picked up a small rounded rock.

When he put up this rock and pulled the hat down, he was gratified to hear the patter of a dozen bullets all round, convincing him that the Indians supposed the stone to be his head. Softly he withdrew himself out of sight, and turned round. Belcour was standing close by, and Blanche Davis had not spoken a word all the time.

"Now, mademoiselle," said Gustave, briskly, "it is time we were off, I think."

He turned away up the ravine, followed by Belcour, who sidled up to him to allow him to mount. Then the gallant charger trotted away, as sure-footed as a mule, up the steep pass, and in a few minutes had turned an angle of the rocks, and was entering one of the numerous dark canons that intersected the mountains.

Down this Belcour galloped at full speed, wheeling into a cross ravine at the end, that ran up for some distance, when it emerged on a broad ledge of rock, and the fugitives found themselves once more in full view of the valley.

Down, several hundred feet below them, they could see the mouth of the pass up which they had first come, and the Indians were still gathered below, evidently the victims of the ruse Belcour had played them.

The rest of the valley was all in commotion; and as they looked, a violent attack was commencing on the train, corralled in the midst of the valley. But Brinkerhoff and the Rock Rider were still invisible.

As the two fugitives galloped out in full sight on the ledge, they were saluted by a vengeance yell and a shower of bullets from below. But Belcour was going at speed, and the lead whistled harmlessly by. In a few minutes more they wheeled round into a fresh canon, and heard the yells of the Indians coming up the first pass in full pursuit.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

## A COOL HAND.

WHEN Carl Brinkerhoff turned off from the direct route to the camp, he kept a steady gallop toward the same woods in which he and his companions had sought safety the day before. His horse was a good stout animal, as Belcour had said—one of the best of the Government horses, and able to outrun the ordinary mustang with ease.

The Indians followed close on his heels, but they could not prevent him from reaching the woods ahead of them, when Carl turned into a narrow path, dug in his spurs, and made for the mountains at full speed. Out of sight of his pursuers in the wood, he gained much more rapidly, as they were forced to go slowly, in order to follow his tracks.

In a very few minutes' rapid gallop he had reached the mountains, and brought up at the foot of a deep dark ravine, too steep to be ascended on horseback.

For a moment Carl was nonplussed, as he glanced to either side and beheld the same impassable barrier everywhere. But there was no time to be lost. Unlike Belcour, he could not keep his pursuers at bay, for he had purposely left his firearms in the mountains to avoid exciting the suspicions of the Indians, and a single revolver hidden under his shirt was his only weapon, besides the long butcher-knife.

He sprang off the horse in a moment, assisted his companion to dismount, stripped off the bridle, and gave his animal a lash that sent him careering away toward the Indians. Then turning to the steep rocks, he addressed his trembling companion.

"Fraulein," said Carl, gravely, "we are in a bad way, if we do not get oop dieser berg. Canst du climb?"

"Oh, yes, sir," said Clara, trembling; "any thing to get away from those wretches! Let us go at once."

"Yakop," said the German, addressing the dog, "show de way, mein hund."

And little Yakop, with a low whine of joy that told how he relished the fun, darted up the bank ahead, followed by his master and Clara Davis.

It was a terrible hard climb up that bank of rocks. Nearly as steep as the side of a house in places, there were others where the crags cropped out in rude steps, and where stunted bushes and tufts of grass afforded a precarious grasp to the climbers. On their way, little Yakop seemingly gifted with superhuman sagacity in finding out the right way, till at last they reached the summit of the ledge, nearly two hundred feet above the level of the forest, and saw above them the bare mountain-side, furrowed with ravines, just as the Indians arrived within sight of them below.

Without a word, Brinkerhoff seized the girl round the waist, and threw her flat on the ground at the summit of the cliffs, cowering down himself beside her. He was only just in time, for a whole volley of bullets came whistling by them as they went down, the Indians yelling savagely. Brinkerhoff turned and crawled to the edge of the precipice, when he looked over.

The brutal face of Coochie was upturned toward him, and the German felt that when he led the chase, escape would be a hard matter.

Several of the Indians had dismounted, and were advancing to clamber up the rocks on foot; and Carl saw that something must be done.

"If I had but mein gewehr," he muttered, regretfully, "I'd fix dem fellers as

makes such a noise down dere. Was ist to be done?"

He peeped over, and saw how slow and toilsome was the upward progress of his foes, at the same time that it was perfectly fearless. They clearly supposed him to be unarmed, save for his knife. He looked back, and saw a dark, narrow ravine a little way off, that promised to afford a ready means of escape into the mountain recesses, could he once get rid of his foes below.

"Fraulein," he said, hurriedly, "you goes mit Yakop up dere, and you keeps quiet; den I keeps dese fellers below from comen up hier. You go quick!"

But Clara wouldn't go. She said she didn't dare to leave him, and begged him with tears not to make her go, so that Carl was compelled to allow her to stay close to him, though he grumbled fearfully at "de leedle kirts vot don't got no sense, dey doesn't. She vant to ket killed and leaye me. Vell, you shall stay den. Maybe you be sorry."

He peered over the cliffs, and lo! an Indian warrior was already within five yards of the top!

Carl whipped out his revolver and sternly awaited the approach of the other, ready to shoot him down the moment he should get to the edge of the platform of rock.

Clara Davis said not a word, but lay still, palpitating, while Yakop was licking her hands, just as if he was entreating her not to be afraid.

Carl drew back from the edge of the precipice now, and knelt down on one knee. An expression of great anxiety was on his face, for he was about to try a desperate experiment.

They could both hear plainly the labored breath of their foe, as he rested at a stunted bush below the edge of the platform. The sounds of panting a little way beyond announced that others were following him. The Indians seemed to have no fear of a man whom they deemed unarmed, and came steadily up, pistol in hand.

Presently the plumed scalp-lock of the first Indian showed over the edge, and in a moment more the whole face made its appearance.

As Carl Brinkerhoff started up, an expression of terror came into the savage's face. He had not expected to find the other waiting for him, and up came his hand with a revolver in it instantly.

The stalwart German stepped forward and caught the long black hair in his powerful clutch, when he blew out the savage's brains with his pistol, before a notion could be formed of his intentions.

The body would undoubtedly have fallen down the precipice, but for the firm grip of the German's left hand. As it was, he dragged it hastily over the ledge, amid a shower of bullets from below, and laid it down.

The Indian, as he had supposed, was loaded with weapons, being a chief of rank, and his rifle had been slung at his back.

"Now, you tammed 'tiefs, lass mir see you comen hier now," growled Carl, triumphantly, as he leaned over the edge of the precipice, careless of wasting any more shots now, and began to pick off the rash warriors who were attempting the perilous climb, ignorant of the danger.

The very first shot brought down a man, and caused such a remarkably hurried scramble down of the rest, that it seemed as if they, too, had been shot.

"Dot vill do," said Carl, quietly, as he put up his pistol. "Dem von't come dieser way no more, fraulein, so I vill dakke dis shentleman's arms, and ve vill go!"

He stepped down as he spoke, and removed the arms from the dead body of the Indian chief.

Then, turning with his fair companion, they plunged into the canon and were lost to sight, just as Coochie gave some order to his men, which sent the whole of them galloping along the foot of the Sierra, searching for an opening.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 145.)

## Short Stories from History.

## Old Legends of the New World.

Wales was the home of other legends of this kind; and the bards were fond of singing of the famous voyages, which were called the "Three Disappearances." The first was the sailing of Merlin and his companions in the ship of glass; the second was the voyage of Gavran, the discoverer, who went in the fifth century to search the Western ocean for the "gwerdonau lion," the Green Islands famous in British songs; the third was the voyage of Prince Madoc, the hero of Southey's somewhat tedious epic. He sailed in the year 1170; and, after some time, came back with glowing accounts of the new world across the waters, so that many ships were fitted out to accompany his second voyage: they never were heard of again, and this was the "third disappearance." The question regarding the fate of Madoc's crews was once considered important enough to be discussed in councils of state. Queen Elizabeth's ministers are said to have debated whether a title to the Spanish Main must not be rested upon Madoc's occupation of the new world; but the claim was never prosecuted, either from its inherent absurdity, or (to borrow the historian's courtly phrase) "because the queen was not of that kind to put her scythe into another man's harvest."

Many attempts were made in the last century to find the lost Welsh tribe. In 1791, a Dr. Williams published a very learned inquiry into the discovery of America by his countrymen; and about the same time the subject received a full discussion in several numbers of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. Some years previously, Mr. Binon, a gentleman of Glamorgan, penetrating to the junction of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers, was fortunate enough, by his own account, to see the lost tribes again. If we might believe the traveler's tale, they recognized their common nationality, and showed him a castle and a church, and a roll of sacred books, which neither he nor they could read. Soon afterward the French Governor of Canada sent some priests to visit the same Indians; and they returned with no fresh information, but with several of the Welsh Bibles which Mr. Binon had left with his friends. Several other expeditions were sent from Wales, of course without success. In the course of one of these, the Missouri valley was thoroughly explored, and the travelers have left an interesting account of the scenery and of the great river; "here winding softly through the plains, and elsewhere forcing its way, and running furiously through hills and mountains full of mines."



## A GOOD DAY.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

I am unwilling to deny  
That I was once a boy;  
Some men would not acknowledge this,  
But I do so with joy.  
And like all lads of seven or eight,  
I was to mischief prone,  
And was not very much account  
For letting things alone.

There was to be a show in town;  
The hills had long been up;  
I'd passed them many times a day,  
And every time I'd stop;  
The clown had stood there on his head  
For twenty days or more;  
The crocodile, though swimming long,  
Had never reached the shore.

The moon it came; my father said  
If I would act just right,  
And keep from mischief just one day,  
He'd take me there at night.  
I promised, jumped upon a chair,  
And waved my hat and roared,  
And did my best to save the clock,  
But, oh, that clock was holed!

Out in the yard I played at ball;  
I tried with might and main  
To hold it back as it went straight  
Into the window-pane.  
I didn't mean to go to let  
The cows get in the corn,  
And had no knowledge of the nail  
On which my pants were torn.

I did the best I could to keep  
From licking brother Bill,  
And had no idea at all that  
That crock of cream would spill.  
I'm sure it wasn't purposely  
I fell into the creek,  
Nor ate those cakes upon the sly  
—Till I got very sick.

When mother sent me to the store,  
I'm sure I went with leaps  
But stumbled on some boys and fell  
Into a game of "keeps."  
I couldn't for my life see how  
That rock should lame the goose,  
Nor why the gate broke under me;  
I must have been quite loose.

The clothes-line wasn't much account;  
It was a rotten thing;  
I snapped it when I only tried  
To use it for a swing.  
I only stepped upon its end  
And broke my sister's doll;  
I merely climbed the shelves, and yet,  
Those dishes had to fall!

That night my father called me in  
And counted up the score,  
Embracing those which you have heard,  
And quite a number more;  
He said, "It pleases me to see  
That you're improving so,  
The count is short of yesterday's;  
Put on your hat, let's go."

## The Mad Puritan.

AN INCIDENT OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

BY LAUNCE POYNTE.

TOWARD the end of the civil war in England, when Charles I., a prisoner in the Tower, was awaiting his trial at the hands of the Parliament, and the remaining adherents of the king, scattered and despondent, were either returning to their homes or fleeing to the Continent, a young man, whose long curling hair and general style of dress announced him as belonging to the defeated party, checked his horse, in a wild and remote part of Wales, beneath the ruins of Chepstow Castle. The young cavalier was alone. In the wild and desolate landscape round him no other living creature was visible, save the birds on the trees, and a few squirrels.

He was a handsome young fellow, and the picturesque costume of the Cavalier set off his light and active form to great advantage. The expression of his countenance was sad and despondent, however, as it well might be, considering the then state of his party, ground down under the armed heel of Cromwell's Ironsides.

"This old ruin will afford me shelter for a night, I hope," he soliloquized, as he gazed up at the hoary ruins. "Tis an ill wind that blows no one good. Little thought the Roundheads, when they battered the old place to bits, and burned the inside out, that the time would come when a 'Malignant' would thank them for leaving him a refuge and hiding-place. Come, Denzil Bohun, thy fortunes are low, to be sure, but who knows when the times may mend? The king shall enjoy his own again, some day, and these hypocritical Roundheads can not oppress England forever. Let us go in and inspect the place, old Roland!"

He turned his horse as he spoke, and rode round the castle, seeking an entrance into the ruins. But the drawbridge had been burnt down long before, and the broad, gaping moat opposed him everywhere. At last, however, he found a place where a small covered way ascended to the surface of the ground, and riding down it, a low sallyport afforded him an entrance into the ruins, just wide enough for a single horseman.

Denzil Bohun rode into Chepstow Castle and found himself in a huge underground stable, where the knights of old that built the tower were once wont to stable their horses. He dismounted from his charger, and bestowed him for the night in one of the great stone stalls.

"Poor Roland!" he said. "Thou must e'en be content with grass for thy fare and stones for thy couch to-night, old horse, for there is neither corn nor straw to be had in this desolate place."

He unsaddled the horse with great care, and going outside into the moat, where the grass grew long and rank, the Cavalier drew his sword and set to work to cut a sufficiency for the supply of his animal. 'Twas a long and tedious task with a blunt sword, and many a time did the youth wish for the humbler but more efficient scythe to aid him; but at last a sufficiency was gathered, and Denzil had the pleasure of seeing the charger fall to heartily, by which time the sun was down.

Denzil Bohun noticed on the floor of the stable many old fragments of half-charred wood, and out of one of these he contrived to fashion a torch, which he lighted by the aid of his tinder-box.

Then he set out to explore the ruins, and find, if possible, a retreat for himself for the night, more comfortable than the dungeon-like stable. He passed through the whole length of the latter before finding a means of exit, and when he did, the prospect was by no means cheering.

A low arched doorway, in the Norman style of the rest of the castle, with the simple notched molding around the face of the stones known as the "dog-tooth," led into a dark corridor, into which he penetrated, not knowing whither it led.

After advancing some fifty feet, the pas-

sage terminated in a blank wall, but at the right-hand side appeared a narrow flight of stone steps, up which the adventurer mounted, winding round and round, in a manner that told him he must be in one of the flanking towers of the castle.

After a long and tedious ascent, he emerged out of a door in the once splendid central hall of the castle, where the tessellated stone pavement, founded on arches below, had defied the fire when the castle had been destroyed.

Denzil Bohun looked round with satisfaction. Of all the castle this was almost the only habitable place left. Its vaulted stone roof was still intact, when the exterior wooden roof was all gone, everywhere else. The cavalier walked round the room in silence, exploring the means of ingress and egress. The grand doorway was a gaping void now. Its once massive iron-studded leaves lay prostrate on the pavement, partly burned and partly shattered. The stone staircase was unharmed, but it only led to the gateway below, likewise bare and open, where the drawbridge that once crossed the moat, now absent, left a black gulf between the gate and the open air.

Bohun shivered slightly, and turned away to the corner of the hall, where a flight of stone steps leading upward gave promise of further discoveries. As he came closer, he was surprised to see a quantity of straw lying at the foot of the steps, an evidence of habitation. With an involuntary gesture, he brought round the hilt of his sword to the front, and, advancing close to the straw, uttered an exclamation of surprise.

A human being, whose surroundings and aspect were those of a wild beast, was sitting up, on the edge of the straw, gazing at the cavalier with lack-luster eyes and hanging jaw.

"Who are you, in the name of God, unfortunate creature?" asked the youth, pityingly.

"I am one whose race is nearly run," said the other, in a hollow tone. "Once I was young and gay as you are, but the waters of affliction went over me, and the hand of the Lord marked me out from my fellow-creatures for punishment, because I shed blood. And yet 'twas the blood of a



THE MAD PURITAN.

tyrant. But 'vengeance is mine and I will repay it,' saith the Lord. He has punished me, and the man Charles Stuart is triumphant."

Denzil Bohun perceived at once that he was in the presence of a maniac; and, from the phraseology of the other, guessed him to be a Puritan. The end of the maniac's speech puzzled him, and he asked:

"How long have you been here not to have heard of the war? His majesty, the man Charles Stuart, as you call him, is a prisoner in London."

The news seemed to have a wonderful effect on the other, for he leaped up, exclaiming:

"Hallelujah! Praise be to the Lord! The woes of Israel are over at last, and John Felton is free. Buckingham! Buckingham! the hand of God held the knife when I plunged it in thy heart, and I am not a murderer, but an executioner. Hallelujah!"

"Who are you, then, in God's name?" asked Denzil, astounded. "John Felton was shot for the duke's death twenty years ago."

"John Felton was not shot," cried the maniac, wildly, "for I am he! Twenty long years have I hid in the woods, like a wild beast, fearing to be caught once more. I saw this castle fall before the armies of the Lord, but I dared not come forth to greet them, for the mark of Cain was on my brow. But now! now! Forth into the world I fly on the wings of faith. Behold me rise!"

He rushed past Denzil, like a flash, as he spoke, running toward the great hall window, at least forty feet from the ground.

"Angels, bear me on your wings!" he shrieked, and the next minute out of the window he plunged headforemost.

Horror-stricken and utterly amazed, Denzil rushed to the window, held out his torch, and looked down. The maniac Puritan's body lay on the stones under the ruined draw-bridge, with a fractured skull.

Almost at the same minute he was hailed from below by a familiar voice, and beheld a party of armed horsemen on the other moat, among whom he recognized friends.

It turned out to be a party of fugitive cavaliers on their way to Milford Haven, from whence they expected to escape to France, and Denzil was glad to join them and find safety along with them.

Who and what the Puritan maniac was, who had so strangely met his death before their eyes, they never knew for certain, but, as rumors that Felton, the assassin of the Duke of Buckingham, had not really been shot, but permitted to escape by connivance, were not uncommon at the time we write of, Denzil Bohun always maintained that it was he himself, crazed through religious fanaticism, on whom he had stumbled so strangely the night he found shelter in Chepstow Castle along with THE MAD PURITAN.

## Only A Mechanic.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

IT was a picture of perfect home comfort that greeted Morris Athelyn's eyes, as, after five years' absence from Applecrest and Millie Danver, he walked up the grassy path to the Danver farm-house. Every thing looked strangely familiar, and he wondered, with a peculiar kind of throbbing at his heart, if Millie was as pretty, as sweet, as when, five years ago, the night before he went away, he had put on her finger an engagement ring. And now he had come back to claim her, after the years of probation.

The wide banner of light that streamed out over the grass sward through the delicate low drapery, revealed the coziness of the room within; the bright Brussels carpet, the spread tea-table, with its silver and snowy damask; the pictures on the gift-papered wall, the vases of flowers, and the bronze clock on the black veined marble mantel.

And—there sat Millie Danver, pretty, graceful, dainty, with black eyes, just a trifle bolder than they used to be, and cheeks just a trifle thinner, and around the small, ruby-red mouth an expression that puzzled the lover as he stopped suddenly to look at her he had dreamed of, day and night, for five years of toil for her sake.

It was an expression of discontent, of languid insipidity he was at a loss to account for; an expression that did not make Millie Danver look as fresh and girlish as the winsome smile he had left on her lips.

What did it mean? Was it—could it be possible that she was fretting under the restraint of her bonds to him? For a moment Morris Athelyn's heart threatened to suffocate him, so madly did that thought set it to throbbing; and just then, through the open sash, there floated out a peal of gay laughter—Millie's voice he knew it was, and then there came a man's voice, one he had never heard, and then Millie's again.

"Oh, Mr. Easterton,"

He heard the name distinctly, "Easter-

"Mr. Easterton, my trade ought to be good enough for me. There is a demand for good carpenters everywhere. Millie, I see your father and Hettie coming."

And he abruptly walked out of the room, but not so quickly that he failed to catch a portion of D'Orsay Easterton's consolatory remark to Millie.

"Never mind, dearest, he is nothing but a mechanic."

Then Morris Athelyn clenched his fists a second, and bit his heavy, bronze-brown mustache fiercely. Then a smile of scorn came to his blue eyes, and at that very minute Mr. Danver and shy little Hettie Van Vorst met him.

The morning sunshine and the clear western wind came cheerily in at the open windows of the little library that opened off the parlor; and Millie Danver, in a trailing white pique wrapper, heavily braided with white and trimmed with big pearl buttons, looked very pure and cool, as she leaned against the aquarium, carelessly talking to Morris Athelyn.

He was looking very closely at her, wondering if it was the vividness of the pink silk tie she wore under her collar that made her look so pale.

"I am very sorry," she was saying, in a tone that was half deprecatory and half defiant! "If I had only written and told you, but—but—"

"You were ashamed, I suppose, as you are now, to let me know you have rejected me, after five years, for a man who has a better prospect in the world than I. At least, who says he has?"

His lip curled, and then Millie flashed out:

"And he has, too! I am sure if I prefer a mercantile gentleman instead of—"

"A common mechanic," he interpolated, still sarcastic.

"Well, yes, if you wish me to mean that," she returned, coolly. "D'Orsay is going with Blanchard, Hoyt & Co., and the prospect is splendid."

Morris smiled again; that queer, mysterious smile that made her so vexed.

"And I like him better, too," she said, angrily, yet with a half glance at his hand-

And, without the slightest recollection of the name, D'Orsay Easterton was formally ushered into the presence of Morris Athelyn, the "Co." of the great firm who had hired Millie Danver's lover for their corresponding clerk.

"Why—oh!—why—" D'Orsay began, confusedly, but Morris bowed very pleasantly.

"Mr. Easterton, I am glad you are so punctual. I hope you will like us, and New Orleans. Forester, show Mr. Easterton his desk. By the way, Easterton, call and see us—400 Pontchartrain Avenue. I think Hettie would be glad to see a friend from the North."

D'Orsay bowed, dumbly; wasn't it singular, anyhow? Surely he had thought that plain, homely-looking man a mechanic; instead, here he was his employer, and one of the richest men in Louisiana.

What would Millie say when she found she had refused the master for the servant? D'Orsay Easterton didn't care to dwell on that question; and still more doubtful was the solving of it, when, a few days later, he walked past 400 Pontchartrain Avenue—a magnificent residence, and saw Hettie Athelyn assisted into her elegant barouche by a servant in livery.

And Millie?

I am obliged to chronicle the truth of her; that in the year of her lover's absence she came across a still more "congenial spirit," and D'Orsay Easterton found himself "nowhere," when he came back to Applecrest.

But outraged Cupid had his revenge on her; for, before she was to be married to her second suitor, "cruel Fate" thwarted her, by leaguely with Death, and obliging Millie to wear fashionable mourning for the last lover she ever had.

## Beat Time's Notes.

THE BLUE LAWS OF CONNECTICUT.

WHOEVER publishes a lie against his neighbor shall be publicly whipped, unless the lie can be proven true.

Men-stealers shall suffer death.

Men who marry shall suffer for life.

No man shall kiss the servant-girl before his wife, unless at his own risk.

All clocks are forbidden to run on the Sabbath.

No one shall run on the Sabbath day, unless he is badly scared and some one is after him. Sabbath begins at dusk on Saturday night.

No man shall be allowed to perform any work on the Sabbath day—the Sabbath for this begins on Sunday morning and lasts all week.

Priests will be banished and suffer death on return, and again if they come back.

Married persons must live together or be imprisoned—prison accommodations ample.

No man is allowed to slander his neighbor more than is absolutely possible.

No man is allowed to snore at night in his sleep.

Five pounds fine to borrow a chew of tobacco when you have plenty in your pocket.

For the privilege of striking your wife, ten dollars; for striking your husband, twenty dollars.

Married folks must take turn about in getting up and making fires in the morning. Men in summer and the women in winter.

If any one commits suicide in this dominion, he will not be allowed to return.

The penalty of death for individualizing your neighbor's sheep with your own.

Fifty dollars fine for dreaming that you kicked any civil magistrate.

No man shall harbor a Quaker, or his wife's aunt.

Five dollar's fine for getting drunk—on two drinks.

No man allowed to part his hair in the middle.

Buttons must stay on shirt-booms.

Any man who courts a maid one year without popping the question shall be fined for contempt of court.

No minister can teach school—education must not interfere with the ministry.

Ten dollars fine for wearing stockings a week and then turning them.

Ghosts and hobgoblins must be shoed away with the horse-shoe; those who do not respect this will be arrested and fined.

Nobody allowed to go crazy in this dominion.

Females caught riding on broomsticks will be arrested, first being duly called upon by the officers of the law to lay the broomstick down.

No minister will be allowed to marry himself or other people.

The practice of eating onions in church will hereafter cease, as it puts too many of the congregation asleep.

A VERY good way to get rich is to cut your quarters in two and make halves of them.

If "Orpheus" sent me that poem as good, then it is bad; but if he sent it for a bad one, then it's good.

SEASIDE fair—sandwiches.

AN arrow-gant youth—Cupid.

A LECTURER who fired up with his discourse was immediately put out.

YOUNG man, at a party always take up with the young lady who seems the most reserved—that is, if the fellow she is reserved for is not there.

If you are waiting on a young lady, be sure she is not waiting on you.

A WOMAN's love of a dress is often superior to her love of address.

THE golden age of all women is Marriage.

You tell a man by his gait, a woman by her gaiters.

A WELL-DRESSED woman has a good deal of fashion-ation.

A PRODIGAL woman wastes the laces, but a foolish woman laces the waist.

A DECEITFUL woman is one of much falsity of bosom.

My little experience has taught me that a flirt is a fool who fools fools.